

THE STUDENT WORLD

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Revelation and History

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THE STUDENT WORLD

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Revelation and History

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PHILIPPE MAURY, *Editor*

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Revelation and History

This is not the first number of *The Student World* to be devoted to a subject which is closely related to history. In 1949 an issue dealt with "Christians in History", and Robert Mackie, then editor, introduced it as follows:

"This is a generation which is conscious of history. The events of 1933 to 1945 have shaped our lives and, though the details are already being forgotten, the bleak impression of disaster remains. And now there are presages of a new and worse disaster. Sensitive youth has little confidence in the future, for its shadows are upon us. We live between the times. Future history seems to grow inevitably out of past history, and the inference is not encouraging.

"In such a situation the Christian faith may be regarded as at least a sort of palliative, which we can use to temper the harshness of the world's impact upon us. But in our more honest moments we realise that a palliative is a wicked thing when it hides from us the real nature of the fatal malady of our day. Perhaps Karl Marx was right and we are only drugging ourselves with brave Christian assertions, whistling hymns to keep our courage up."

The situation has not greatly improved since 1949, and history still remains as a shadow upon us. This is probably one of the reasons why so many Christians today are looking with a burning anxiety, not only at the political events of our time,

but at possible interpretations of history. A few years ago the name of Professor Toynbee came up in all conversations on this subject. Marxism, which is basically an attempt at understanding history, is both at the centre of the political storm and a system of thought which is occupying the minds not only of communists but of all men.

But secular views of history are far from being the sole object of concern. Theologians are also involved in the battle, and a list of Christian books on the understanding of history would occupy several pages. One of the most significant theological discussions in recent years was provoked by a theory dealing with the relationship between history and revelation — that of “demythologizing” elaborated by Professor Bultmann in Germany. Readers of *The Student World* might well wonder why our student magazine is concerning itself with a controversy which largely affects professional theologians. The answer is simple. While it is true that professors and students of theology are deeply involved in this discussion, it is also evident that “demythologizing” is simply the expression in intellectual terms of some very basic questions which are in the minds of a great many Christians: Has the Bible anything to do with modern history? Is it something more than a book written for people who lived twenty centuries ago, in a language and about questions which have lost their relevance today? Or, in other words, what is the core of the Christian message which transcends history, which remains true through all ages? It is impossible to escape these questions when reading the Bible, when participating in a Bible study group, and especially when speaking about the Christian faith to modern unbelievers. In the task of witness which is our *raison d'être* as Student Christian Movements and as the Federation, what is to be our criterion: what modern men think about our world or history or science, or what other men in the past have thought about similar questions? How can we discover, not what men thought, but what God says, so that our words and witness may become His Word, and carry its eternal power and joy. This issue of *The Student World* is an attempt to describe the way in which Christians today are confronted with the challenge of modern historical views, as well as with the burning reality of history.

You will also read in this number of our magazine a report of a meeting between some representatives of the Federation and some delegates of the International Union of Students, the headquarters of which are in Prague. It is appropriate that the joint communiqué issued by the meeting should be published in this issue of *The Student World*. Conversations of this sort demonstrate both the inevitability of facing history and the need for the Federation to present its Christian witness at the centre of the historical turmoil. Such attempts are, of course, affected by the weakness of human hearts and minds, but we trust that God will use them to His glory in His great work of redemption within history.

PH. M.

The Relation between Revelation and History

BERNHARD W. ANDERSON

Some say the theologian and the historian are strange, if not incompatible, bed-fellows. Allegedly an insurmountable barrier separates them: the theologian articulates the esoteric data of revelation with conviction and commitment; the historian reports the factual data of history with dispassionate honesty. Like oil and water, "the historical and the theological points of view do not mix". This position is defended with great vigour and acumen by Professor Robert H. Pfeiffer of Harvard University. He writes: "The unhappy marriage of history and theology, owing to the prevalence of one over the other or else to mutual incompatibility, was never a true union and only divorce will result in the fruitful development of each of the two disciplines."¹ With this understanding, the work of the historian and that of the theologian run along in parallel lines which meet only on the distant horizon — and not even there in reality.

On first consideration it would seem that this divorce might be mutually advantageous. Historians can rightly point out that historiography, when under the control of theologians, often has been marred by tortured distortions of historical facts and has placed severe limitations on honest inquiry. "Truth no longer malleable to human need", in the words of William James, is the historian's creed. On the other hand, theologians can rightfully complain that historians, governed by their hidden presuppositions, have overstressed "non-theological" factors. Some historians have "explained" the Reformation as a product

¹ "Facts and Faith in Biblical History", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, March 1951, p. 13. The article represents the presidential address delivered before the national meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis.

of the interplay of the Renaissance, emerging nationalism, and the economic aspirations of the rising bourgeoisie. Similarly the Bible has been "explained" as a literary deposit cast on the beach of history by the waves of sociological-economic-political forces. What would seem more satisfactory, then, than for the historian and the theologian, like Abraham and Lot, to part and go their respective ways? If one happens to be both a historian and a theologian, he will have to live under the tension of a split personality, his head saying one thing and his heart another.

This writ of divorcement can be drawn up on paper, but the divorce is annulled in actual life. It may be possible for a natural scientist to affirm that "faith and facts do not mix" (although even he must begin with what Whitehead calls a "faith in the order of nature"), but historical facts cannot be treated in a vacuum from which all value and meaning have been evaporated. Surely the historian is more than an archaeologist who examines ancient artifacts and locates dates on a bare skeleton of chronology! Heaping up a lot of grains of sand will make a sand-pile, but an accumulation of facts does not constitute history. And if this separation between "faith" and "knowledge" is untenable for the historian, it is impossible for the Christian theologian. In theological language, this would mean a dualistic separation of "the historical Jesus" from "the Christ of faith", with the result that the theologian could attribute a negligible importance to the earthly career of Jesus of Nazareth and not even be disturbed if the "historical" element were pure fiction. But this dualism resembles the ancient "docetic" view that the Incarnation in a real historical person was just an appearance — a trick of the senses like an optical illusion. If the early Church recognized this view as a flagrant heresy, Christian theologians today should be quick to sense the error of separating the realms of history and revelation, of knowledge and faith.

Granting that historical science and theology are such specialized fields that it is practically impossible for any one individual to attain complete competence in both, what is the point of contact between them? This is only another way of asking the question: what is the relation between history and revelation?

I

It would be well for the historian and theologian to begin by recognizing their need of each other, for each has made positive contributions to the other. Speaking for the theologian, it cannot be denied that modern historiography has been profoundly influenced by Christianity. H. G. Wood has observed that "the great advance in methods of historical enquiry took place in the field of church history, and was largely the work of men of positive faith"¹. Even the assumption that historical research is a *meaningful* occupation — an assumption which would hardly find support on Hindu or Buddhist grounds and which was not fortified by the ancient Greek view of the cyclical nature of history — is a legacy from the Christian view of historical time. And speaking for the historian it must be said that modern historical studies have made a tremendous contribution to Christian theology. The application of the historical method to the Bible has emancipated the theologian from the view that revelation is identical with the words of the Bible or that its content is ideas or propositional statements. Moreover, the historian's insistence upon the historically-conditioned character of all expressions of faith, his emphasis upon the importance of "non-theological" factors in the social environment, his achievement of a historical empathy which enters imaginatively into the life-situations of the past — all of this has contributed immeasurably to our understanding that the treasure of God's revelation is contained "in earthen vessels".

Nevertheless, something more is required than mutual congratulation. Historians and theologians can be reconciled if both are willing to confess the presumptuous claims each has made, claims which have driven a separating wedge between history and theology.

Dehistoricizing revelation

Christian theologians may well confess that the Church always faces the temptation of dehistoricizing its faith, thereby treating revelation as something aloof from the realm of unique,

¹ H. G. Wood, *Christianity and the Nature of History*, p. 159.

particular, and non-recurrible events which is the proper field of the historian's concern. H. Richard Niebuhr has pointed out that the Church has been most vigorous in times when it has used a historical method and has spoken in confessional terms about events which constitute "the story of our life" ¹. However, in past decades it has been fashionable to represent the Christian faith in quasi-Platonic terms — to speak of *ideas* or *ideals* which, though appearing in the context of biblical history, are timelessly true. Jesus is said to be one who embodied the ideal, and the rise and spread of Christianity are accounted for by Victor Hugo's dictum: "Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come."

Older liberal Christianity claimed that it could "demythologize" the Bible by stripping it of the outmoded cultural wrappings which enshrined the central religious truths. In the United States Harry Emerson Fosdick popularized this view in the pregnant phrase: "abiding experiences within changing categories". In part the appeal of this view lay in the fact that it provided emancipation from an archaic *Weltbild* which is untenable in our scientific era; in part the appeal lay in the detachment of Christian faith from "the scandal of particularity", the anchorage of revelation to events that occurred in the special stream of history with which the Bible deals. Sometimes these "abiding experiences" seemed to fade out into individualistic pietism or a mystical feeling of God-consciousness; sometimes they were construed as "abiding truths" — the God "idea", the "principle" of the infinite value of human personality, the "ideal" of a society based on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Rudolf Bultmann's challenge that theologians should demythologize the New Testament represents a far more serious effort to communicate the intimate relation between revelation and history — and specifically the historical situation of twentieth century man. His attractive position has the great merit of giving a more authentic expression of the perennial existential situation of man: the folly of man's attempt to live on his own terms, his deep estrangement from God and his true self, and

¹ H. RICHARD NIEBUHR, *The Meaning of Revelation*, chapter 2.

the overcoming of guilt and anxiety by the divine Love which accepts him. Bultmann seems concerned to point out that the "external history" with which the historian usually deals is not the "inward history" disclosed by revelation — the history of man-in-relation-to-God and God-in-relation-to-man. Here, then, is a magnificent effort to translate the Gospel for modern man who is alienated from the categories of the Bible. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether this position does full justice to the relation between revelation and history. It is one thing to demythicize the biblical *Weltbild* — the naive three-storied picture of the universe; it is another thing to demythicize the biblical *Weltanschauung* — the perspective upon historical time which unfolds from Creation to Final Judgment, with God's "mighty act" in Christ being the centre of history. Bultmann's demythology turns out to be the substitution of a new mythology of history (that of existential philosophy), a mythology which narrows the vision of historical time to the existential Now, the "realized eschatology" of the time of decision. Significantly, Bultmann begins his monumental *Theology of the New Testament* by observing that the message of Jesus of Nazareth provides only the "presuppositions" of New Testament theology; properly New Testament theology begins with the *kerygma* of the Church. Accordingly he devotes only a small fraction of his *Theology* to the career of the "historical Jesus". In spite of Bultmann's concern for history, this comes dangerously close to cutting the connection between history and revelation.

Detheologizing history

If Christians are tempted to dehistoricize revelation, historians have attempted to detheologize history, that is, to deal with history as though the theological question could be ignored. Here the word "theology" is used in a broad sense to refer to the presuppositions or the standpoint of the historical observer. If by "theology" one means a conscious belief in God who intervenes in history to manipulate events according to His grand design, then of course excellent history can be written without any theological reference. Indeed, the historian who deals with the Book of Joshua should recognize that the account has been

heightened by religious imagination, and should present a more sober account of the fall of Jericho than the judgment that "the walls came tumbling down" because of divine intervention. However, if it seems naive to present history as an extraordinary drama of supernatural happenings, it is equally naive to suppose that history is viewed objectively (that is, non-theologically) when presented from a secular point of view. This is the position which Professor Pfeiffer takes. Citing the court-history of David found in II Samuel 9-20, he says that it is "entirely impartial and objective, without any trace of a philosophy of history, reporting no divine interventions aside from oracular responses: it is unsurpassed in its accuracy in describing facts and their consequences" ¹. Of course, when compared with the ecclesiastical portrait of David given in Chronicles, the narrative in II Samuel is much more factually accurate. But the illustration is badly chosen, for the central motif of the biography is the working out of the divine nemesis (announced by the prophet Nathan) in David's family affairs until, as a broken-hearted old man, the king dies in the midst of palace luxury and intrigue. To some degree this point of view determined the historian's selection and handling of the material.

But even granting that this biography is factually accurate, what about the significance of David's reign in relation to Israel's history and the complex inter-relatedness with the histories of other nations? Can we concede that the modern historian, who must include a wider range of events in his purview, will be objective just because he is "secular"? This claim rests on the dubious assumption that he can detach himself from involvement in history and, like an angel, look down upon the human scene with aloof neutrality. The historian is not concerned with naked facts but with meaningful, remembered events. The way he selects, arranges, weighs, and relates the data of the remembered past will depend to a great degree upon the standpoint of the observer, just as a painting must be seen from the standpoint of the painter who viewed the landscape from a particular spot. This is no excuse for writing history according to fancy, for the historian is obligated to stand on the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

"particular spot" from which the historical landscape can be surveyed most adequately. Nevertheless, the historian cannot escape a faith-standpoint any more than the theologian. Pre-suppositionless thinking is a historical impossibility. As H. G. Wood observes, the writing of history is more an art than a pure science.

II

So far we have said that the theologian and the historian need each other, for the theologian, despite his temptation to dehistoricize revelation, is concerned with historical data, and the historian, despite his attempt to detheologize history, is concerned with questions of value, meaning, and purpose — in short, he cannot escape making "theological" judgments. Now we shall consider the relation between Christian revelation and history.

God's revelation in Christ

Let us recognize immediately that revelation does not provide the historian with "information" or "facts" in an oracular fashion. The date of the Exodus or the location of St. Peter's grave cannot be settled by the claim that God has dispensed special historical information to men of faith. Revelation is God's act of self-disclosure ; it is not the disclosure of a body of scientific or archaeological facts. Hence, revelation is no substitute for the most critical kind of historical inquiry. But revelation does have something positive to say to the historian about history. Or — stated better — the historian's response to God's self-revelation will result in a transfiguration of history. Briefly let us consider the following implications of God's revelation in Christ.

Historical consciousness

1. First, God's revelation necessitates taking a positive view of historical time. Bertrand Russell has said : "Both in thought and in feeling, even though time be real, to realize the unimport-

ance of time is the gate of wisdom.”¹ This may be the gateway to a certain kind of philosophic wisdom which contemplates, or a kind of oriental mysticism which seeks to be dissolved in, the Timeless ; but it is not “the beginning of wisdom” for biblical faith. Pascal pointed out that the God of the Bible is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — not the God of the philosophers and the sages, by which he affirmed that the God of the Bible meets men in history, in *time*. Although the Bible has no word for “history”, it is dominated by a historical consciousness from first to last. Time is not a meaningless flux from which man must take philosophical or mystical flight. History is the theatre of God’s revelation, of His purposeful and redemptive activity. In the Christian view this biblical cavalcade of divine visitations comes to climax and fulfilment with God’s incarnation in a particular Person at a particular juncture of history.

Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time and of time,

A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history : transecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time,

A moment in time but time was made through that moment : for without the meaning there is no time, and that moment of time gave the meaning.²

The conception of time as meaningful and purposeful is not a natural deduction which one makes from a study of history itself. It is, however, a given presupposition for the historian who affirms the reality of the Incarnation, who believes that an Event has happened with once-for-all-ness and divine novelty. For such a historian, history will not be patterned after the cyclical recurrence of nature, nor will it be regarded with the Hindu as *maya* or illusion. In the words of the American film serial, “time marches on”. History is a movement that introduces something new and creative, an irreversible process of events that make a difference. Modern historical attitudes are profoundly indebted to Christianity at this point. J. B. Bury,

¹ Quoted by WILL HERBERG in *Judaism and Modern Man*, p. 203.

² T. S. ELIOT, from Choruses from *The Rock*, VII.

in his well-known classic, *The Idea of Progress*, has pointed out that the doctrine of progress is intimately related to the Christian view of time. And as many have observed, the marxist vision of the dynamic movement of history towards its consummation is a "Christian heresy".

Revelation as judgment

2. Again, revelation is a judgment upon history and upon all historical perspectives from which the meaning of life is apprehended. Even though events are under the sign of *Immanuel*, "God with us" in the midst of historical time, God is the Creator and Lord who is sovereign over and transcendent to the historical process.

Israel's prophets proclaimed that the God who had brought His people out of the land of Egypt was Israel's Judge and, indeed, "the Judge of the whole earth". The nature religions of antiquity, by contrast, represented man's attempt to find harmony and security within the rhythms of nature. Such religious naturalism easily lent itself to an acquiescence in a state of social equilibrium, the *status quo*.¹ But the God who revealed Himself to Israel was the critic, not the defender, of the historical order. The awareness of a radical conflict between God's will and the actualities of the social order was not only a powerful dynamic for historical change but also a corrective of the human pretension to understand or control history from any human standpoint, even the standpoint of the elect people. Reinhold Niebuhr observes that the election-faith — the conviction that Israel was chosen not because of her merit or virtue — represents "a radical break in the history of culture". "It is," he says, "the beginning of revelation ; for here a nation apprehends and is apprehended by the true God and not by a divine creature of its own contrivance."² According to the prophetic witness, God has a controversy with His people. He is the destroyer of all idols of man's making. "The Lord of hosts has a day

¹ See G. ERNEST WRIGHT, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*, chapter 2.

² REINHOLD NIEBUHR, *Faith and History*, p. 104.

against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up and high" (Isa. 2 : 12).

To say that God is enthroned above the earth, so high that "its inhabitants are like grasshoppers" (Isa 40 : 22), has two implications for the understanding of history. One is that history's meaning is not secreted by the historical process itself, by the unfolding of an immanent logic (the *Logos* which human reason expresses). Its meaning is revealed by Him who, in majesty and holiness, transcends the limitations of human life. The other implication is that all human judgments about the meaning of history are necessarily relative (historically conditioned) and therefore subject to God's criticism, God's No. This does not mean that the historian is left in the position of the melancholy Preacher of the Book of Ecclesiastes, affirming the sovereignty of God but not being able to see any divine design in the flux of events. Made in the image of God, man has the capacity to discern evidences of pattern and meaning in history. But man who is subject to the limitations of finiteness and sin should never presume to hold the meaning of history in his, his nation's, his culture's, or his class's grasp. History must be rewritten in every generation. This is not only because today's vantage point makes possible the assessing of events in a wider context or because today's generation asks new questions of history to which the historian must speak. It is also because today's vantage point and today's understanding cannot be absolutized. The sovereignty of God over all times and His judgment against all human pretensions is the basis for a genuine freedom of historical inquiry.

The ultimate meaning of history

3. Finally, only on the basis of revelation can the historian affirm that history is ultimately meaningful. The doctrine of progress or marxist utopianism can satisfy the question of the ultimate meaning of human life only when men live under the illusion of an indefinite extension of time, and believe confidently that man's power puts him in control of nature and history. But science, which seduced men into this idolatry, has now become the form of God's judgment upon it. Science has

painfully reminded us of the final end of all human achievements according to the inexorable second law of thermodynamics. The same science has placed in man's fumbling hands the tremendous powers which can bring about a premature annihilation of civilization well before the final curtain falls upon the earth. Professor Tillich has pointed out that modern science is now speaking the language of Israel's prophets of doom and "in this way science is atoning for the idolatrous abuse to which it has lent itself for centuries." ¹

History by itself is inconclusive. This is the all-important "fact" to which the historian must address himself. Just as an individual's life is terminated by death, so historical time contains within itself the law of dissolution and death. If death has the last word, the optimistic doctrine of progress or the marxist dialectic are only sophisticated ways of whistling in the dark as man approaches the cemetery. The appropriate response to this fate would be the Stoical defiance of W. E. Henley's *Invictus* or the magnificent, unyielding despair of Bertrand Russell's *A Free Man's Worship*. The acceptance of the idea of progress, says H. G. Wood, "is indeed an act of faith but not of saving faith". "In these ultimate issues," he continues, "we stultify ourselves if we believe too little. To believe too little means that we lose the robustness of rationalism without gaining the strength of faith." ²

The God of revelation is "the living God" — the God who is not subject to the law of death which finally overtakes individuals and the whole historical process. He is "the Beginning and the End", the Eternal One who holds the times of men in His Hand. His revelation in Christ transfigures the whole of human life by giving a vision of history which recedes backward to Creation and forward to the Final Judgment and New Creation. The Creation is not the mere manufacture of nature, but the beginning of historical time with God's creative Act; and the Final Judgment is not just the dissolution of the physical universe but the final fulfilment of all historical striving in His eternal purpose. History by itself is tragedy and, in the long run,

¹ PAUL TILlich, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, p. 5.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

a farce. But the Christian sees history from the faith-standpoint of the Incarnation — “that moment of time” which gave time its meaning. History is set within God’s purposeful time-scheme of Beginning and End ; it is bounded by and a part of Eternity. Therefore every moment of time has an ultimate significance, for the last word belongs not to death but to Resurrection. As Paul says, “If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. . . . But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 15). Viewed in this perspective, historical research and historical activity are not vain strivings after the wind, but are meaningful in an ultimate sense. The historian and the theologian, who find themselves to be as closely bound together as Siamese twins, can be “steadfast and immovable” on this common ground of faith, knowing that in the Lord their labour is not in vain.

The Temptation for Christians to Consider History as Revelation

CYRILLE ELTCHANINOFF

I am God, and there is none else ; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure : ... I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass ; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

(Isaiah 46 : 9-11.)

In the time in which we live we are becoming more and more conscious that history is one of the values which especially determine the life of mankind. It is certain that our time thinks of problems more and more in an historical perspective. No-one can any longer escape the implacable hold of history. We all feel its weight, whatever our attitude towards it. Whether we see in it the weight of God's hand or a process guided by a blind determinism, history frightens us. To escape that fear, man tries to explain history, to give it a meaning.

Christianity and history

It is not necessary to prove that Christianity cannot take a detached attitude towards history, because it is involved in history and Christian truths are historical and not ideal truths. Creation, incarnation, cross, resurrection, church, second coming are the various stages of God's intervention within an historical process which has a beginning and an end. Christianity is an historical religion. It lives and is realized within the flesh of history. It is important to note that Christianity is the only religion which gives reality to historic time. It does not see time as a decayed form of eternity as does Hinduism, for example. Eternity and time are two co-existent realities. Hinduism is

the religion of disincarnation, of the negation of time ; Christianity is the religion of incarnation and gives a meaning to historic time.

Besides Christianity, marxism, national socialism and existentialism, each in its own way, have a philosophy of history, ranging from its idolatry to its denial. If Christianity claims a meaning for history, it must not only affirm it, but discover its positive content.

What should be our Christian attitude towards this idolatry of history or this denial of its meaning ? Should we accept history as the will of God ? Should we discern in it the power of the devil ? Can we consider history as closed to any supernatural intervention ? Each Christian conscience is confronted with these problems by the very fact of belonging to the Church and living in history. We are citizens of two worlds, of two co-existent histories. . We already live in the "new time", which is becoming actual in the "old time" to which we also belong. This dual existence is called to disappear at the end of history. For the present it implies a constant *engagement* in this world and a constant release from the world ; it is impossible to enclose oneself in one of these realities and to deny the other. History is as real as the Church. If time is bound to disappear (Rev. 11 : 6), if it is only a temporal form of existence of the creature, this in no way means that we should take a docetic attitude towards history, that is, question its ontology.

Marxist and Christian conceptions of history

A confrontation of two conceptions of history, the marxist and the Christian, may help us to better understand the Christian attitude towards the historic processes. This confrontation is all the easier since marxism and Christianity both oppose, on the one hand, any philosophic idealism, which claims to have solved all problems through interpreting the world, and on the other, the nihilism of atheistic existentialism for which history has lost any objective reality and meaning. Existentialism confines itself within a humanism of despair which denies the value of history, the objectivity of its processes, whether dialectic or providential.

Marxism makes history into an absolute. This is not the result of a theory of history ; neither is it the central idea of a doctrine or philosophy of history. It arises from the acceptance by marxist man of an inner dialectic of history. The class struggle is not a marxist doctrine ; it is the very dialectical movement of history. Marxist man not only takes part in this implacable struggle which must lead the working class to victory. For him history is the absolute he obeys, the truth he accepts. On the contrary, for the Christian the absolute is the transcendent God who is also immanent in the world, in history. The marxist does not claim to make history according to a plan, to a preconceived program. He obeys history ; he lives fully within history. The marxist ideal does not transcend history ; it is within it. It is even misleading to speak of a marxist ideal, as it is indeed of a Christian ideal. In both cases the "ideal" is the supreme reality. Just as the Christian God is not an "ideal", static and foreign to the world, but a living God working in the world, so the marxist "ideal" is not outside history, but is revealed in the revolutionary dialectic emerging in history. For the Christian the source of everything is in God, and history finds its meaning in Him. For the marxist there is no God ; history judges itself, and finds its meaning in itself.

Let us take an illustration of this problem. Any ethics is defined by reference to the supreme value, the absolute. In marxism history is this absolute, and ethics therefore is defined in reference to it. What goes the way of history is good ; what goes against it is evil.

We are confronted therefore with two attitudes towards history entirely different from one another, even though they are both on the same plane of historical realism. For the Christian the duality between God and history is a fact which enables us to discover the meaning of history, while for the marxist the inner dialectic of history, which leads it towards a classless society, is the only value calling for the commitment of every man.

If for the Christian the purpose of history is the Kingdom of God, for the marxist it is the classless society. In both cases the city to come, whether the Heavenly Jerusalem or the earthly paradise, is being built in history ; both Christian and marxist

must work towards its coming. In both cases not only is history taken seriously, but the city to come is *already present* within it. It is the Church for the Christian, the party for the Marxist. The great difference lies in the fact that the Church is rooted in God and lives by God, while for the marxist the party is nothing but the association of members conscious of the march of history and involved in the struggle. In both cases community is achieved in history. The world is potentially this community, this Church which possesses the truth, the mystery of the peoples' salvation. Marxism and Christianity both see the world as a mission field. Each convert in his turn becomes militant, and it cannot be otherwise, for the world must be saved. This initial conviction that the world must be saved makes the strength of Christianity and of marxism, and explains the fact that both the Christian and the marxist are involved in the world, in history. This *engagement* is not a decision made ; it is a fact of the very condition of man who discovers himself involved in the world.

Starting from such a conception of history, the marxist can make value judgments on each historical event from a marxist point of view. He can, for instance, tell whether an event has served history. It is history which judges itself and not God. On the contrary, the Christian sees God's hand in history, and the only dialectic in history is that of the free will of the workers of history.

Marxism, time and eternity

We can say that the marxist conception, in spite of its claim to have eliminated mystery from history, has not succeeded in eliminating the unforeseen. It is particularly in the problem of the end of history that we find how ill-founded is its theory. Time without end, history without eschatology, is absurd. Only the absolute in which there is no movement has neither beginning nor end. History begins and ends ; it ends in an eschatology which will be the judgment on history. We cannot say that after the end of historic time creation will participate in God's eternity : man himself is a creature and even after the last judgment he cannot transcend his creaturely condition. We can only speak of a post-history in which man will continue to grow in God.

The purely temporal dialectic of marxism impoverishes history, reducing it to historic time which has no contact with eternity, the absolute, and empties history of any meaning. This dialectic of history, being its own end, must necessarily be eternal, without any end. This is the weakest point of the marxist conception ; for history is within time and cannot transcend it into the infinite. Time prolonged infinitely will not give birth to eternity. The leap from the realm of necessity into that of liberty is the expression of the marxist's nostalgia for eschatology. For the Christian historic time has a content — eternity. Time as the form of existence of the creature cannot exist without contact with eternity. The marxist eschatology, which is the classless society, is a degradation of the communion of saints in the Heavenly Jerusalem. In many cases marxism transposes the realities of Christian faith to the sterile ground of its dialectic, emptying them of their transcendent content, of their original meaning. We can even say that the marxist conception of history is a Christian heresy, the most terrible of all heresies.

We cannot speak of the meaning of history in marxism, because everything receives its meaning from the outside ; God alone gives meaning without having received it from anywhere. In denying any transcendence in history, marxism absolutizes it. We cannot call this conception of history anything else than the *idolatry* of history.

Divine and human freedom in history

We can characterize the Christian attitude to history as centred around the reality of God's providence, as opposed to determinism, and as based on the principle of liberty. History is ruled by God's liberty, which meets no other obstacle than man's liberty. God's liberty of action in history is limited by man's liberty. This is the whole mystery of man's creation as it emerges in history. God willed to create man in His image. Man is not a puppet in the hands of God, but a free creature who can resist Him. Every act of man's freedom is creation, if it continues the creation initiated by God. The forces of evil come between God and men to prevent this divine-human colla-

boration. The mystery of history lies in the unpredictable character of freedom. We may therefore describe history as creation of the spirit. The meaning of history is the accomplishment of God's will that we all be united again in Him in the New Jerusalem. Man can oppose it and does, and history becomes a tragedy. Salvation lies in the free acceptance of God's will. The miracle of this accomplishment is in the act of accepting through faith the promise of God ; to believe means to hope in this promise. If the world has a meaning, God alone can be it and give it. To discover the meaning of life and history is to cling to God and to collaborate with Him for the continuation in history of His work, which is preparing the way for His Kingdom.

The presence of evil in history is so obvious that it cannot be explained only by the corruption of man's nature because of original sin. Evil is much more powerful ; it is above all the power of the devil. It is true that Christians today have a tendency to minimize the strength of the devil ; this is indeed the greatest victory which the latter has won over mankind — to convince it that he does not exist. The devil does not always act directly in history, because it is easier for him to use the good will of men who obey him with greater complacency than they do God. This third force in history will be eliminated in the New Jerusalem. History and the heart of man are the arena of this struggle, the outcome of which we already know, even though the fight goes on.

God acts in history

How does God act in history outside the Church ? First, as St. John says, he "enlightens every man", which is to say, there is in every man the grace of God, a possibility of opening himself to God. As Dostoevsky has so well put it, every man, even the most guilty, has God within him. Secondly, there is the external manifestation of God in the world of His creation. The world is the *impressio dei* : the whole creation speaks of God, but the world, because it cannot see, does not recognize in itself God's imprint. What we are mostly concerned with is the direct action of God in history, in the life of nations and peoples. This action can take place through men, through historic events, or even

directly. God does not need to destroy natural laws to act in history ; He uses them. This action of God in history is often hidden because we do not understand, and refuse to understand, God's plan as it is carried out throughout history. The history of the Jewish people is a striking proof of this. They were not conscious of the work being accomplished through them. They struggled with God or were deaf and blind to His will proclaimed by His elect. In order to be fulfilled God's plan needs to be taken up again by men ; they must respond to the act of God. Each act of God is a challenge, a judgment. The Christian must see in history the realization of God's plan, and must respond to it. This plan has a beginning and an end, and is carried out through successive stages. From the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation the Bible speaks to us of this plan. From the first act of creation God has been acting. The Holy Spirit is the Person by whom this is accomplished. The coming of Christ is the central event in God's plan for the salvation of the world. We are touching here the greatest mystery of history, which is the coming of Christ, the breaking through of the absolute into history. Christ's incarnation, cross and resurrection are the centre of history. Before Christ's coming God was acting in history ; with Christ's coming God re-entered history and sanctified it. A new history began. The Church became the new reality through which the salvation of the world is already being carried out. The Church's history is the new holy history which co-exists with secular history. This breaking through of the absolute into history has an ontological significance : the whole of mankind has been sanctified in the mystery of Christ's ascension, and is in Christ on the right hand of the Father and irrevocably one with Him. No reversal is possible ; mankind is already one with God. All of mankind is potentially God by grace, and must be brought to Him through the action of the Church in history.

The act of incarnation gives a new meaning and a new orientation to history. Christ, dead, risen and living in the Church, will come in glory to judge the quick and the dead. The Church is the community of those who expect His second coming. The second coming of Christ is the event towards which history is moving and which gives it a new meaning.

The Church in history

Through our membership in the Church we are all led to participate in God's plan. The Body of Christ is now being built in history and we are its members. We must always ask ourselves the questions: Are we participating in the building up of the Church? Are we Christ's workers in the world? Do we take part in the preparation of His second coming?

It is clear that to be a Christian means to be a member of the Church. There can be no theology of the Christian confronting history; there can only be an ecclesiology, which, being biblical, is turned towards eschatology. There cannot be any formal definition of the Church. The Church is defined in relation to history, to its end. The Church's task in the world is to bring to the feet of the Lamb on the day of His second coming the whole of mankind. We shall all be judged *as church members* and not as individuals, for the grace which has been granted to us through baptism and confirmation must be used for the building up of the Body of Christ which is the Church.

It is interesting to note that the eternal, sacred aspect of the Church is truly achieved in its divine fulness on the day of the Lord, on Sunday. Sunday is the day of the Church, of the Heavenly City. Sunday, being the first and the eighth day of the week, is a kind of "ex-temporal" day. It pre-figures eternity, and the Heavenly Jerusalem. Sunday worship is a participation in Christ's sacrifice on the first day and the anticipation of the eighth day of His second coming in glory. For the time being we live between the first and the eighth day, in the tension, in the expectation, which will be lifted at the end of time, the eternal Sunday. Between the first and the eighth day of Christ's coming there is no interruption in the revelation; it continues throughout the whole history of the Church. We cannot speak here of the Church's mission in the world; we can only state that the Church is above all a missionary community. Its task is to preach salvation to the world. In the second place, its action in the world must be one of sanctification and not of power. If the Western churches have often been tempted to govern the world through secular power, the Orthodox Church has done it only through the spiritual power of the Church.

The two forms of God's presence in history of which we have spoken are, so to speak, qualitatively different. If God acts in history, He is present in the Church. It is therefore possible to speak of the unfailing help which God gives to the Church. This infallibility of God's help is the infallibility of the Church as the Body of Christ, and not the infallibility of each of its members, or even of its magistry. The Church is infallible and "the gates of hell will not prevail against it". It is the whole of history which is full of meaning because in history the salvation of the world is being accomplished. It is throughout and within history that revelation is fulfilled, and it is not history which is the absolute.

Message, Myth and History

PETER KREYSSIG

When Professor Rudolf Bultmann of Marburg, Germany, published in 1941 his now famous article on "The New Testament and Mythology", the church struggle in Germany was at its height and the second world war in full swing. In the racking explosions of ideological struggle and open political warfare this parcel of theological dynamite lay — so to speak — with smoldering fuse waiting to go off with a shocking bang after all the other noise had finally died down in 1945, and when the Church found itself confronted with the new and enormous task of proclaiming its message in the ruins around it. This does not mean, of course, that the problem itself had slipped into the theological discussion entirely unnoticed. On the contrary, a live controversy was going on among leading theologians in Germany and even among theological students, who received study material on this question while lying in their front-line trenches. But this controversy and exchange of opinion was carried on among the interested and initiated people mostly in typescripts and circular letters, just as almost all other theological work of the resisting and confessing church had to be done without any publicity or even under cover of secrecy. Thus the problem flared up widely only in 1948, when H. W. Bartsch published, in a volume entitled *Kerygma and Mythos*, a collection of the most important contributions to the question, including Bultmann's original article. In a few months this book aroused excitement, confusion, applause and violent reactions not only in professors' studies and theological seminaries, but also in pulpits, congregations, synods and meetings of church leaders, and created new theological "camps" and rifts which cut across all confessional boundaries and traditional groupings. There was — and still is — talk of heresy, all the more grave because it was felt to be a real one, springing up within the Church, and not merely a succumbing to ideologies attacking from without.

There was also, of course, much summing up in reports and talks, with a consequent vast amount of mutual misunderstanding and all the more violent reactions, as well as genuine concern and difficulty in grasping what others were talking about. The excitement was general, and laymen, hardly clearer about the issue itself than were the theologians, were at least fully familiar with the name of Bultmann, which was widely used to describe a general atmosphere of danger and impending heresy and which excited the curiosity of people entirely indifferent to church affairs or, for that matter, even to Christianity. Theological students, hitch-hiking across the country, were occasionally asked by truck drivers: "Tell me, what is all the excitement about this Bultmann? Everybody seems to be talking about him!"

The problem

To describe briefly "what all this is about" is no easy task. Like many other creative theologians, Bultmann has built his own terminology, and the fact that in many instances he reverts to the terms of existentialist philosophy (Heidegger and Kamlah) does not make his writings any easier to translate.¹ But an attempt should be made at least to outline the basic conceptions of Bultmann's theory, although it must of necessity remain fragmentary in a short article. It will have served its purpose if it helps to explain the deep concern — both positive and negative — which many Christians, and particularly theologians, feel in view of the problem of "the New Testament and mythology". For Bultmann this problem arises from the fact that the New Testament presents us with the message of the salvation of the world in Jesus Christ in terms of the ancient, mythical conception of the world, reflected in later Jewish apocalyptic thought and gnostic myths of salvation, both of which made their impact upon the writing of the New Testament in various ways. Basic

¹ Cf., for example, the important distinction in Bultmann's terminology between the two German words, *historisch* and *geschichtlich*, normally synonymous, which is difficult to express in English because it has only the one word "historical". It is perhaps well to mention now and again these problems of translation, which often play an interesting part in the difficult task of clarifying ecumenical discussions of new theological thought.

to this conception of the universe is the tripartite scheme of heaven, earth, hell, the idea of the intermingling of natural and supernatural forces which determine man's life from outside, the idea of Satan and demonic powers influencing man and working in nature, the idea of the end of time and the passing of the present age of this world, to name a few of the important traits. It is in these terms that the Gospel proclaims its message, and as a result it appears in a mythological form : the end of this age is near, the Son of God, as a pre-existent being, appeared on this earth, His death on the cross and His subsequent resurrection have accomplished man's liberation from sin and death, His second coming marks the end of this world and the final establishment of God's judgment and kingdom.

The scandal of mythology

But it is impossible, says Bultmann, for modern man, "whose thinking has been formed irrevocably by the scientific world view", to take seriously a message which presents supernatural events and miracles, like the virgin birth, the ascension into heaven, or even the resurrection of our Lord, as objective facts in history in the sense that as such they form a foundation for our faith in the saving power of Christ's cross. The mythical world view, which was, so to speak, open to transcendent, "unworldly" powers manifesting themselves in the world by breaking through the causal law, has been dislodged by the scientific view, which is "closed" to the influence of transcendent powers. In the same way modern man can no longer conceive of himself as a person open to supernatural influences. He considers his thought, will and feelings to be his own and not subject to magic transformations against his will ; he can only view himself as a personal entity, a "unit" in all his acts of life and consequently also in his relation to God. He can understand his relation only as a personal one, in which God addresses him in his own existence.

Because of this new situation, a biblical message which confronts man today with the obligation to believe in supernatural events like the virgin birth, miracles breaking through the causal law of nature, and so forth, presents insuperable diffi-

culties to his modern thinking and causes an intellectual *scandalon*¹ which should not be too easily identified with the proper scandal of the cross which St. Paul refers to in I Corinthians 1: 23. This false scandal arises from an ill-considered reproduction in our message of the New Testament mythological world view in which supernatural events are stated as objective historical facts, with the deliberate admission that their vindication by objective historical proof is not only impossible but even contrary to the nature of the Christian faith. To our modern way of thinking, however, objective facts can be regarded as such only if verifiable by equally objective proof. A faith that requires a *sacrificium intellectus* of this kind, however, degenerates into a "work" by which man cannot be saved. Out of all this arises for Bultmann the task of the *Entmythologisierung* (demythologizing) of the biblical message, in order to confront man with the real scandal of Christ's cross. This term, however, should not lead us to believe that we have to do with a purely negative process of elimination.

The liberal misunderstanding

Occasionally Bultmann was violently, if perhaps a little too hastily, applauded by representatives of the liberal school of theology, who thought that his objective was the old rationalistic attempt to eliminate all those things from the New Testament that are no longer consistent with the rational, scientific view of man and nature. But this is a gross misunderstanding. His aim is not to reduce the New Testament message to the things which happen to be rationally tenable, thus building a sort of generally ethical conception of Christianity upon the basis of the life of the "historical Jesus". Some of the statements in his first article may appear to support this view.² Yet his professed aim is not one of elimination but of interpretation. He maintains — and also produces a good deal of exegetical proof for his opinion — that the inherent tendency in the mythological statements of the New Testament is to demythologize

¹ Etymologically, **stumbling block**.

² The famous — or, as some would hold, infamous — *evangelist* (we have done with . . .) in Bultmann's article, in which he attacks the proclamation of mythological events as objective historical facts to be believed.

and interpret themselves towards an existential understanding by their hearers, or that this is the aim of at least some of their authors, especially of St. Paul in his letters. Bultmann claims that, in using largely the vocabulary of existential philosophy for his interpretation of New Testament theology, he is not applying to the Bible heterogeneous terms from outside, or even starting *a priori* from basic positions alien to the thought of the New Testament, but that this existential interpretation is demanded by the New Testament itself, and that the terms of existential philosophy merely offer themselves as the most appropriate vehicle of conveying the biblical message to our modern hearers. The most instructive way to come to a closer and more detailed view of Bultmann's intentions may be to turn to the central and therefore most controversial issue in his theory: the demythologizing of Christ's death and resurrection.

The cross and the resurrection

"Demythologizing" is an unhappy turn of phrase even in its original tongue. Apart from the purely aesthetic view of language, it stresses a negative aspect of Bultmann's undertaking which, if we interpret its purpose correctly, is meant to be incidental to his positive aim of interpretation.

The redemptive significance of Christ's cross, says Bultmann, is bound to remain unintelligible to man today if it is presented to him in the objective mythological terms of the New Testament: how is the sacrificial death of the pre-existent, incarnate Son of God, whose blood is said to be the remission of man's sin and his liberation from death, related to my own personal life today? How can the distant historical fact of Jesus' execution have this significance? Faith in the saving power of the cross thus demands a preliminary belief in the supernatural events of incarnation out of pre-existence, of the miracles of the resurrection and ascension into heaven. By proclaiming these supernatural events to be objective historical facts on the same level as the cross (which is an objective, ascertainable, historical fact), we are distorting their meaning and turning them into a kind of supernatural "evidence" proving the validity and significance of the cross as a saving power. We try

to make them a solid, historical basis for our faith. But by this very act we deliver them into the hands of objective historical and scientific criticism; the proclamation of the message then must of necessity become a losing battle the Church has to fight (and actually has been fighting ever since) with the scientific method of approaching historical facts and with the intellectual doubts of the modern mind formed by the scientific world-view.

And this, says Bultmann, is precisely what must not happen. For these supernatural events are not an objective basis for our faith; they are themselves objects of faith in the sense that they are "expressions of the significance" which the cross has for those who believe in its saving power.

The meaning of faith

The exegetical definition of what the New Testament means by "faith" plays a decisive role in this theological argument. Bultmann admits that there are actually two conceptions of faith in the New Testament: (1) faith that holds all statements (mythological or not) about the person of Jesus Christ, His pre-existence, life, death, resurrection and second coming, to be true events in history, and (2) faith as man's existential decision, through God's action, to accept the cross in his own life as God's judgment and mercy on his previous understanding and justification of himself, thereby gaining new life, freedom, hope and openness for the future, all of which represents a demythologized description of what the New Testament means by life in the Spirit. According to Bultmann, these two aspects must never be separated, as they so often are not only in our dogmatics but also in teaching and preaching. It is this second aspect of faith which in our time urgently calls for *Entmythologisierung* of the first, and which already tends to do so in the New Testament itself.

Through this existential interpretation, which shows its relevance for modern man's anthropology in terms of existential philosophy, the significance of the cross, that is, the resurrection, becomes an event in history¹, in man's own life here and

¹ *Geschichtliches Ereignis* as opposed to *historisches Faktum* (historical fact).

now. As such it is a reality for our faith. The only objectively ascertainable, historical fact is the witness of the apostles to the resurrection, not the event as such. Thus the resurrection is only part of the *Kerygma*¹, as an explanation of what the cross means for man in terms of his own personal existence.

* * *

It is very tempting to branch out from here into a more specialized description of the theological discussion which ensued after the appearance of Bultmann's provocative statement. There is hardly an illustrious name in Continental theology which has not at one time or another entered into the resounding debate. It is all the more tempting because the oversimplification given in the short outline above includes only a very few of the far-reaching implications of Bultmann's theory. And there has been no opportunity to present a number of the major criticisms which have been levelled against it.

But our task now is to deal more fully with the situation which this issue has created among students, rather than that among an *élite* of professors. Yet there will be an opportunity to mention a number of points on which students faithfully reflect some rays of light which their teachers have managed to throw into the general dimness of confusion and excitement.

Significance for theological students

It must be mentioned here that there was much less concern about this problem among the laymen in the student field than in other parts of the churches. All the greater was — and still is — the agitation among the theologians. It is perhaps not too much to speak of a real crisis in the realm of theological education. This is not due simply to the fact that the discussion has proceeded on a level of theological thought which requires a familiarity with the special language theologians like to speak. But the problem we are dealing with here is one shared especially by everyone whose particular task it is to preach and

¹ Message of the New Testament.

bring the message of the New Testament to man in our time. Confronted with Bultmann's theory, every one of them has to face this question anew, and take his stand. Whatever this stand may finally be, one thing is certain — and for this the majority will feel indebted to Bultmann: a confrontation with this problem inevitably brings to light every kind of latent duplicity in a preacher's theology. It no longer permits him to have a comfortable orthodoxy for the pulpit and the congregation, and a secret, personal theology where there is room, for example, for all kinds of liberal reductions and reservations he may — perhaps subconsciously — make for himself.

That this has been — and still is — a problem for many people can be gathered from the reactions produced in a number of them by Bultmann's article. Some admitted their great relief at being able to talk and preach again about texts dealing with the resurrection or ascension of our Lord without an acute feeling of dishonesty about their own intellectual difficulties as to the historical "matter-of-factness" of some of the biblical reports. They found it a certain liberation to see the history of salvation lifted clear *en bloc* from a level of scientific historical inquiry, where the Church had fought a gallant but hopeless battle with the modern world and even in its own ranks, and to find it transferred to a philosophical environment whose own terms seem to blend almost naturally with those the New Testament offers for its own interpretation. Furthermore, they find it exceedingly apt and in accordance with the scriptures themselves that all that remains accessible to modern man and his factual view of history is the cross of Jesus, and nothing but the cross. It is this pinpoint that anchors the witness of the apostles and the Church of all time in the history of the world, and that at the same time saves the message from becoming pure philosophical subjectivism, timeless and not concrete.

Criticisms and dangers

But this point of view certainly did not get by unchallenged. There is, of course, a fierce onslaught against it from the more fundamentalist quarters and the school of *Realtheologie* represented by Professor Stauffer of Erlangen, who also has his dis-

ciples among students. Recently I met a theological student of this group who earnestly regretted the lack of institutions like the medieval Inquisition which would deal as effectively with "heresies" as it did in those days. This is mentioned, not as a very representative view of any group, but as an indication of the emotional side of the debate which in this situation is not entirely negligible.

Other and far more serious criticisms come from people who in principle recognize the problem Bultmann has seen, but who differ with his particular solution. They maintain that he is dissolving the whole substance of the biblical message into statements about man's own existence, that his theology is almost pure anthropology, and that, in taking too seriously the scientific objectivism of the faithless, he leaves no room for "truth in faith" which would be more than subjective, as expressed by the Church in theological and doctrinal statements. Is he not wrongly identifying two sides of theology — doctrine and proclamation — each of which has certain rights and tasks of its own? According to his rigid system of interpretation, it will no longer be possible to utter such a statement as, "Our Lord lives", as an expression of our common *consensus fidelium*.¹ Bultmann does not deny the reality of the resurrection for our faith (or does he?): he merely asserts that it cannot and must not be proclaimed as an objective fact in history. But then in what sense can the resurrection be proclaimed at all? Is not the very term inadmissible as mythological? It seems that no positive statement is possible other than in terms of man's new existence as open to the future and free from the encumbrance of the world.

Here we come face to face with the dangers inherent in the situation Bultmann has created for many students. Certainty about the things which can and must no longer be said in our message is much greater than that about the things which are positively to be affirmed. A good number of theological students are in danger of missing the subtle borderline which separates the realm of Bultmann's theology from that of existential philosophy, and of finding themselves all of a sudden on

¹ Consensus of believers.

the other side without the ability to retrace their steps. A student pastor tells of the increasing reluctance of theological students in his congregation to view themselves as ministers of a church with an obligation to preach regularly on texts not of their own choosing.¹ The ground under their own feet has become shaky. The scholar's study seems a much less compromising environment than the pulpit. This is further enhanced by the genuine respect due to Bultmann's brilliant scholarship and the personal courage with which he follows through the questions of his own mind relentlessly to the end, even if they lead close to the pits of heresy which yawn to right and left.

Looking ahead

And yet, one thing is certain : the problem has been put and there is no honest way to simply ignore and circle it entirely. At present the whole discussion seems to have bogged down over the statement and counterstatement of conflicting views. There is still a great deal of controversy over problems of terminology. The recent debate has acquired a scholastic flavour through people trying to interpret further the interpretations of the great minds who have been busy with Bultmann's thoughts. Thus it is not yet clear to what extent — if at all — Bultmann's theory will initiate a new era of theological thought in the second half of our century. It depends on the degree to which the task of positive interpretation of the message of the New Testament can be carried out on the seemingly rather rigid and confined basis of his terms. Already there are other voices claiming that here theology is concerning itself with a scientific world view which itself is even now in the process of changing. In the seemingly so solid and scientific realm of physics, people are beginning to wonder what significance we may safely ascribe to the term "objective facts". Professor Heisenberg of Göttingen would maintain that even in the realm of physical phenomena nothing exists which can be established in abstract disregard of the person of their human observer. This is an argument, however, which works both

¹ It is normal Lutheran practice to preach on biblical texts according to the church calendar.

ways. For just as it is an illustration of a changing world view no longer confident in the presuppositions from which Bultmann wants to extricate theology, so also it is a justification for an emphasis on an existential component in all human search for truth. Thus people are even debating whether Bultmann with his theory is actually fighting a rearguard action or whether he is the most advanced of all.

The air is mostly filled with questions, and students are looking everywhere for guidance. To be quite frank, they have found little so far. While on the one hand a good many of their teachers are opening a wide breach in the solid walls of orthodoxy with the more destructive forces of Bultmann's thought, on the other there are too many feeble attempts to uphold the *status quo*, which lack not so much conviction as the power to convince. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why so many students are now turning hopefully towards the things Bonhoeffer had to say during his tragically shortened span of life. Here seems to be a new vista, both modern and firmly grounded in the scriptures. If only there were more like him — and alive ! But perhaps this is not well spoken in faith. If we can honestly stand the pressure of all these deep problems and fight our way through, and not around, them, God may open the way to a more profound understanding of the message of His Word, in which the present perplexities will appear only as a healing crisis and not as the impending doom of our faith.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

Communiqué

On June 23-24, 1953, representatives of the International Union of Students and the World's Student Christian Federation met in Vienna on official instructions from their respective organizations to discuss questions relating to:

1. Peace, with special reference to students.
2. Student relief.
3. The role of the university in society.

The purpose of the meeting was to give an opportunity to the two organizations to become better acquainted with each other's views and convictions on these three questions and to consider any possibility of constructive cooperation in these three areas.

I. *Peace*

We shared the conviction of the urgency of peace — positive peace, not alone the absence of political and military conflict — as the most immediate concern and need of the student community. It is *possible* and *necessary* to hope for peace. Both this constructive attitude and its expression in action are the marks of a responsible student in the present situation.

While holding different views on the present world situation, we strongly repudiated the idea that war is inevitable. We affirmed the possibility of peaceful coexistence of different political, economic and social systems in the same world and the necessity, on the political level, of solving conflicts of interest through negotiations. We were glad to note an increasing atmosphere of hope in this respect in the present world situation and in the relations between the great powers.

Our conversations have manifested a willingness in both delegations to participate in a confrontation — vigorous and positive — involving many different opinions, views and convictions on peace. Such confrontation is constructive and should be encouraged, not only among our constituencies, but wherever possible.

We agreed to propose to our governing bodies a larger consultation on the theme of peace, dealing with the following questions :

1. The positive meaning of peace, with special reference to cultural and educational development.
2. National independence and great power relations in relation to justice and peace.
3. The responsibility of the student community.

We shall recommend to our governing bodies that this consultation be held within a year and include representatives or spokesmen from other international and national student organizations and milieux.

II. *Student relief*

We shared a profound conviction that the acute needs of students in many countries demand a considerable development of relief activities. Therefore we are concerned about the division which exists in this field. Two principles upon which unity may be achieved are the following :

1. Relief activities should be only concrete, and bring all students together. Combining relief with other activities creates the danger that relief can be used or considered as a means of propaganda.
2. Relief activities should aim to develop self-help and exclude any attitude of "charity". This calls for active participation and support of students and their representative organizations in student relief.

We suggest to our governing bodies that they look towards the implementation of the following practical steps with reference to the relations between International Student Relief and World University Service :

1. The creation of joint distributing committees in South Africa and, with the agreement of the local unions, in some Southeast Asian universities.
2. The organization of common fund raising campaigns in various countries.
3. The organization of a common program planning instrument.

We express our profound hope that both the next Assembly of W.U.S. and the next working committee of I.S.R. will take the necessary steps to create the conditions of unity in student relief.

III. *University in society*

Attention was given to the present situation in the universities of the world. It was recognized that often this situation is far from satisfactory and in certain cases goes to the extent of a crisis. A careful study of this situation is needed : it can be fruitfully carried out in a cooperative way and a constructive solution to the present problem largely depends on the extent of this cooperation. This implies for student organizations and individual students an immediate responsibility.

Our discussion led us to underline the importance of the following points :

1. The university is both rooted in, and responsible to, society.
2. Free access to the university regardless of race, nationality, social origin, material resources, political opinions and religious convictions, as well as provision of adequate facilities for students, are indispensable to the function of a true university.
3. The function of the university is not simply professional training, but preservation and development of education, culture and science in the service of mankind and society.
4. Infringement upon academic freedom and rights and perversion of culture, science and education are detrimental to the proper functioning of the university.

Having seen the importance of these points we maintain that it is necessary to pursue conversations about them through a broad exchange of correspondence and articles, internationally, nationally and locally, and at a later stage through a joint consultation.

* * *

The very friendly atmosphere of our meeting and the results reached in our two-day consultation make us hopeful for furthering contact and exchange between our two organizations.

For the International Union
of Students delegation :

GIOVANNI BERLINGUER
I.U.S. General Secretary.

For the World's Student Christian
Federation delegation

PHILIPPE MAURY
W.S.C.F. General Secretary.

Contacts between Communist and Christian Student Groups in Finland

Discussion between the communist and Christian student groups in Helsinki started a few years ago. After the war the communists, who had lost almost all contact with the rest of the student community due to their own ideological exclusiveness, very understandably sought to come together with Christian groups with whom they could have at least relatively matter-of-fact discussions.

The communist invitation to visit their group was followed by a similar invitation from the S.C.M., and in the course of the past few years four discussions have taken place. However, mutual encounter has not been limited to these. In innumerable other formal and informal discussions in the student world the communist and Christian views of life have struggled with each other, sometimes quite fiercely. For example, there was a public discussion on "the rise of the Asiatic people", held in the great auditorium of the university, where the main arguments on the Christian side were drawn from the report of the Bangkok World Council of Churches — International Missionary Council meeting, and a similar discussion of the topic "the religious and the scientific world views". When the communist speaker tried to identify the marxist and scientific world views and invited the Christians to make common cause in the people's democratic peace movement, the representatives of the S.C.M. put forward examples of how the marxist doctrine had prejudiced scientific views in the U.S.S.R. The fate of Ordass, Mindzenty and Beran was also mentioned.

Although these public discussions took place in a rather fanatic atmosphere and caused the communist press to attack the S.C.M. leaders, the private discussions mentioned above were carried on in a very different spirit, since neither side had in the first place to defend its principles or to win a public victory over its opponent. The members of the S.C.M. have entered into these discussions in a conscious effort to understand the thinking of the communists. For example, criticisms of the Korean war or opinions about circumstances in East Germany were not contradicted simply because they were expressed by communists. It has been very encouraging to find at least an attempt to achieve an unprejudiced attitude, and to see the interest it has aroused. The last visit of the communist group to the S.C.M. in October was typical in this respect. The topic chosen was: "What good do we see in each other?" In the

introductory presentation a real effort was made to discover what was positive on the other side. The discussion did not for this reason lose its sharpness, nor did it become a mild compromise. However, an atmosphere was created in which it was possible to express their common views, but to state even more clearly what divides them.

What, then, has been achieved through these encounters? It is of course obvious that the communists have used them for propaganda purposes, but the Christian students have also had an opportunity to proclaim their faith. To their knowledge neither side has made any converts, yet the talks have not been in vain. The following might be put on the credit side:

1. The Christian students have come to know communism, not only as the anti-Christian monster painted by its opponents, but as an ideology capable of stirring young students with its great promises.

2. The communists have seen that Christianity is not only a means for ruling the masses, but something infinitely more real. When we begin to see behind the ideas people whose sincerity cannot be questioned, we are forced to modify our prejudices.

3. When other doors of contact close to the communist youth, as a natural result of their idolatry of the people's democratic way of life, then it is valuable if Christians do not ostracize them, as if abandoning them to their own evil. A Christian should be ready to listen to everyone, to let real facts determine his attitude and not to regard as worthless what is said on the other side of the barrier.

4. These discussions may also affect the future. It is always possible in our time that one group or the other may be put into a concentration camp. Such discussions, which have been carried on in a free atmosphere and on a basis of equality, will then not have been in vain. Words are the only weapon we Christians can use. If now, while it is still possible, we refuse to fight words with words, how can we expect that our words will be listened to at some future time, when freedom may no longer exist?

5. An encounter between people is always of value. Even though we have to part with the realization that no common ground exists or can exist, given the present presuppositions, the fact that we have come together without becoming angry at each other is of value. After one strained debate a communist leader said to me: "Before the war we would have been thrown out of here." That it did not happen this time was a victory in itself.

MIKKO JUVA

Chairman of the Finnish S.C.M.

Our Task of Theological Education

Report presented by the Sub-Committee on this subject
at the General Committee at Nasrapur

1. What is theological education ?

It is impossible to be a Christian and not have a theology, at least implicitly. The religious climate of thought, our experience and education, all influence our understanding of the Christian faith and contribute to our theology. The problem is not whether we have a theology but what sort of theology we have.

On the other hand, there is widespread fear of theology. Theologians are suspect because their language is not understood and because their systems do not seem to come to grips with the experience of laymen. Many Christians are nervous of theology because they believe it to be arid and scholastic, without relevance to life in the world. This is due to a misunderstanding of the nature of theology and the function of the theologian. Both layman and theologian need to see afresh the relation of theology to evangelism.

It is pertinent, therefore, to ask what sort of theology the W.S.C.F. has in mind when it speaks of its task of theological education. It is a theology which is rooted in God's plan of salvation as recorded in the Bible and which comprehends the whole life of man. The production of such a theology in a systematic form is, of course, dependent on the work of trained theologians, but it cannot be achieved apart from the life and experience of all men, wherever they are in the Church and the world. It will also stand in need of constant revision and restatement, because reformation is a continuing feature of the life of the Church.

The responsibility of the W.S.C.F. for theological education is two-fold. In the first place we have to help the student to obtain that minimum understanding of biblical and systematic theology without which he cannot grow at all in the Christian faith and witness to others. In the second place, we have to assist the student to a theological understanding of his whole life, set as he is in the midst of the university and the larger world.

In this connection the problem of communication is a critical one. Students who have not lived in the churches and who are being trained in the specialized disciplines of the modern university find most theological language confusing, if not incomprehensible.

On the other hand, students who have grown up within the churches are often so familiar with the words that these cease to have meaning. To find a common language for theological conversation among all students is a task to which the Federation should give more attention.

It is convenient to distinguish in this field within the W.S.C.F. between the general responsibility of S.C.M.s to all students and their special responsibility to theological students.

2. General responsibility of the S.C.M.

A. BIBLE STUDY

The most serious criticism of Bible study in the Federation is that it is fragmentary, both in the sense that it is not sustained and in the sense that few people discover the unity of the Bible.

We suggest :

a) Study of introductory material to the Bible before detailed study is given to the parts. Use of Suzanne de Diétrich's *Discovering the Bible* or other similar books is strongly urged.

b) That every two years each local group arrange a course of five addresses on God's plan of salvation as recorded in the Bible. This is presented as a major recommendation.

c) Further examination of Bible study methods. Study in creative ways, for example, producing a study outline for others, writing a play to convey the message of a particular passage, is helpful in making the study more meaningful. God's Word leads to witness, for example, political witness.

d) That the availability of literature be examined. It was questioned whether there are sufficient commentaries available which, though written by scholars, are not too detailed in their discussion of critical comments and yet provide illumination of the text.

e) That the Executive Committee consider the reprinting of Marie-Jeanne de Haller's *The Living Record* and other similar publications.

f) Increased and better training in group leadership. Pastoral ability as well as knowledge and ability in chairing are needed.

g) That Bible study should be seen in intimate relation to the task of the S.C.M. as a fellowship continually active in Christian witness in the university. The Word of God comes to men only in a living context and demands obedience in the world, for example, in politics,

the university, etc. The witness can be carried out both in the Bible study group, when Christians and non-Christians meet together, and in other contexts.

B. CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Reports from many national Movements state that there are numerous requests for doctrinal teaching. In the light of what we have already said, we believe these requests to be legitimate.

We suggest :

a) That on years alternate with the biblical introduction course, addresses on dogmatics be given in every local group. Such addresses should include doctrinal exposition and implications for life in the contemporary world.

b) That group study, both locally and in conferences, be used to follow up and supplement such a beginning. Cooperation with other organizations, such as the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., should be explored.

c) *The Student World* might regularly include short bibliographies of the best books available for such studies, together with short notes about them. Simple yet profound books are needed, rather than involved, technical ones.

C. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend :

a) That a two weeks' course on Bible study methods be given at Bossey for theological and non-theological students.

b) That a regular feature of *The Student World* be a "Manual for S.C.M. Work". Practical advice based on the collected wisdom of the W.S.C.F. could thus be made available to national Movements and their local groups.

c) That the Federation staff, together with the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey and the International Missionary Council, should pay particular attention to the special needs of Asian S.C.M.s.

3. Special responsibility to theological students

A. We recognize the value of the work which Keith Bridston has done for the Federation in the past three years among theological students, particularly in bringing them into contact with the ecumenical movement. We feel that the W.S.C.F. must continue

this work, but we realize that staff time cannot be made available for it.

We therefore suggest :

a) That the W.S.C.F. encourage participation in the Ecumenical Institute and the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies by recruiting theological students through the national Movements.

b) That the W.S.C.F. ask national Movements to encourage study of the materials that have appeared in connection with the Lund Conference and in preparation for the Evanston Assembly, as a necessary part of theological education in understanding the development of thought within the ecumenical movement.

c) That the W.S.C.F. ask national Movements to encourage interconfessional study groups in seminaries and theological faculties. To implement this suggestion the W.S.C.F. should ask Robert Nelson, the secretary of the Faith and Order Commission, to prepare study outlines for such groups.

d) That an issue of *The Student World* be devoted to the question of church union, with particular reference to the theological problems involved, the experience of the Church of South India, and the discussions in Ceylon and North India.

e) That the W.S.C.F. give publicity to the Anglican-Orthodox-Presbyterian discussions arranged jointly by the S.C.M. of Great Britain and Ireland and the Russian S.C.M. in Paris, so that people from other countries may have an opportunity of benefitting from the discussions.

f) That the W.S.C.F. encourage its national Movements to seek direct relationship with theological students in their seminary communities. Every attempt should be made, however, to keep theological and other students in close contact with one another.

B. THE GOSPEL IN THE MODERN WORLD

The question of the relevance of the Gospel in the modern world is a two-fold problem of communication and of relevance in concrete situations in the secularized world. The S.C.M. should consider it a special responsibility to confront theological students with problems which are not faced in seminaries but which confront ministers in their work.

We recommend that the W.S.C.F. should encourage :

a) Visits to seminaries by non-theological students, so that theological students are made to face the challenge to the Gospel of other disciplines and professions.

b) Theological students to form groups for the study of such subjects as politics and the arts.

c) Theological students to take other work (e. g. manual labour) for a period before ordination.

d) Theological students, who are intending to undertake advanced studies, to consider seriously the possibility of doing so in non-theological subjects.

C. REGIONAL PLANS

a) Realizing that theological students in Asia and Latin America do not have adequate opportunities for ecumenical discussion, we recommend that the W.S.C.F. explore the possibilities of regional conferences for theological students in these areas.

b) We instruct the Federation staff to discuss with the Ecumenical Institute the possibility of the extension of its program to Asia.

c) We recommend that the W.S.C.F. hold a Theological Students' Conference in cooperation with the Interseminary Movement and the Canadian S.C.M. near Evanston at the time of the World Council of Churches' Assembly in 1954.

Appendix

The Sub-Committee on Theological Education received before its last meeting a document on "Theological Students and the World's Student Christian Federation" sent by Keith Bridston from Indonesia. Had the document, which was received too late for an adequate discussion, been received earlier, it would have formed the basis of a Commission rather than of a Sub-Committee. It brings out the following points based on the experience of the W.S.C.F. in its work among theological students, and sees its task among them as:

a) To include theological students in the life of the S.C.M. and in the Federation.

b) To stimulate the discussion and study among theological students of their particular vocation and the nature of their educational training.

c) To encourage the interest and participation of theological students in the ecumenical movement.

The document goes on to raise some problems affecting theological students in their studies, which may be briefly expressed as follows :

a) The ministry of the Church is to the world an "irrelevant profession". Do theological students see their vocation as being the representative expression of the vocational ministry to which all men are called in the secular world ?

b) The training of the ministry has not kept pace with the changes in the Church and the world, and as Bartlett has said : "The biggest challenge of religious education is to fit a camel-train philosophy into a diesel civilization."

c) The theological colleges tend to be a ghetto completely unrelated to the world. Theological students who are training to be pastors and shepherds have not really faced the challenges faced by people in the real world among whom they will be exercising their pastoral ministry. Hence, their message is irrelevant to the world and "they are equipped only to answer questions that people do not ask".

d) The missionary task of the Church should be at the centre of a theological curriculum, but often theological students never recognize this.

e) Concern has been expressed that seminaries are not communities that produce men of prayer.

f) Many churches which are member churches of the World Council of Churches have not recognized that this fact should make some difference in the way their theological students should be trained. There should be an opportunity for real encounter with theological students of other church traditions. Theological students who are the potential ministers of local congregations should be given an ecumenical training if ecumenism is to have any real meaning at the "grass roots".

g) The S.C.M. should encourage theological students not to rest content with their curricular studies, but to do some pioneering work in thinking out some real issues facing both the Church and the world.

The General Committee, fully recognizing the value and usefulness of Keith Bridston's article, if enlarged further, recommended that he be requested to circulate this document, in consultation with the World Council of Churches' Study Department and the Ecumenical Institute, to a selected group comprising :

a) heads of seminaries ;

- b) professors at theological faculties ;
- c) theological colleges, departments of S.C.M.s or S.C.M. staff ;
- d) actual theological students.

He should then be asked to correlate the replies and to produce a manuscript for a Grey Book which could be examined by theological students' conferences and the Executive Committee which will meet during the time of the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches, which would decide what use could be made of this manuscript.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Philippe,

The publication in the January number of *The Student World* of the Report of the Commission on Ecumenism and Evangelism in Latin America, although it has yet to receive the authority of the Federation as a whole, will raise some disquieting questions in the minds of your non-Protestant readers. I realize that it is difficult to judge the situation in Latin America unless one has seen the Roman Catholic Church at first hand, and it is also possible to guess the spiritual struggles which may lie behind the attainment of even the position set forth in this document for those whose background is that of the Protestant churches in Latin America, and that against such a background, the document may represent a positive step forward. But these reservations made, it still remains true that the appearance of this document seems to take the Federation nearer than before to a position in which we give our support to the view that the Roman Catholic Church is a legitimate field for proselytism, or at least to a position which by its frank acceptance of a Protestant theological viewpoint rules out in advance the legitimacy of a Roman Catholic, or even in the broader sense a "Catholic", witness within the ecumenical movement. I understand that the General Committee has recommended certain changes in the document, and these would certainly improve it in detail, but the character of the document as a whole remains unaltered. I am glad to learn that the General Committee recommended that the document be studied in a special consultation. Pending that, perhaps you will permit me to make a few comments upon it.

First of all, the document assumes, without calling it in question for a moment, that the S.C.M.s in Latin America have the task of

carrying on "evangelism" among Roman Catholic students. This is justified, if at all, by the unequivocally Protestant statement that the faith of all who call themselves Christian must be brought under the judgment of the Word of God — by which is presumably meant (a Protestant interpretation of) the Scriptures, though this is of course not the only possible theological meaning of the phrase, the Word of God. Paragraph four deplores the divisions among the Protestant churches on the ground that they are an obstacle to "Christian witness" among Roman Catholics; paragraph five assumes that Roman Catholics do not actually but merely "claim to" accept Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, and that they need personally to be challenged to make such an acceptance of Him, and tacitly implies that they will never be challenged in this way from within their own church. Paragraph seven, which has also, I understand, been criticized by the General Committee, assumes that there is necessarily a tension between membership of the Roman Catholic Church and a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, which will lead either to working for the reformation and renewal of the Roman Church (phrases which to a Roman Catholic can only spell disloyalty or heresy), or more probably to joining a Protestant church. If that is not proselytism, how can it be distinguished from proselytism? There are a few ecumenical phrases, but they evidently refer only to the relations between the Protestant churches, and they can hardly dispel the impression that the Roman Catholic Church is not for a moment taken seriously as a Christian church, however mistaken in its doctrine and practice, but only as a mission field.

Of course we all find that ecumenism, especially a superficial kind of ecumenism, is perhaps rightly apt to take second place when the salvation of souls seems at stake. I know that from experience; having recently entered the parochial ministry, I discover that my attitude to Protestant dissenters in the parish, who may spread what I can only call false doctrine among the flock for which I have a subordinate responsibility, is far less tolerant than it was when I was only a student. But I am able to remind myself that the understanding of the position of these churches, and of their character as Christian bodies, which I gained from the S.C.M., remains true, and that whatever must be said against dissenters in the parish, they are at least Christians. I also know that it is very hard for an Anglican to understand, say, a conservative Baptist — the gulf is very wide — but also that that does not excuse him from attempting to do so. Similarly, one can imagine the evangelistic and pastoral zeal of Protestants in Latin America, and their difficulty in under-

standing Roman Catholicism. But it is difficult to feel that they have tried hard enough to see the Roman Catholics as fellow Christians, when one reads articles from responsible leaders, such as that by Richard Shaull in the same number, which deals with the same theme as the present letter.

This article fully substantiates the deductions I have drawn on the basis of the conference document alone, as to the attitude of Latin American Protestants to their Roman Catholic brethren. I do not know how in so far as it deals with Roman Catholicism this article differs, except in the intelligence of the writer, from the ignorant anti-Catholic polemic which can be found among ordinary people in Britain to this day. It is evident from the description of the Virgin Mary as a member of the Godhead that the writer does not recognize the true character of Roman Catholic dogma about the Virgin Mary, and his mistaking of devotion to the Passion of Christ for the worship of a lifeless Christ is one of the commonest errors in Protestant polemic. One may willingly recognize the possibility — we have been told so over and over again — that Roman Catholicism in Latin America is incredibly corrupt, but it is still true, though Mr. Shaull omits to notice it in his evaluation of the state of Roman Catholicism, that whatever may be the effects of popular devotions, they cannot nullify the existence of the Mass itself, which is profoundly and inescapably Christological and Christocentric, and is the centre of all worship wherever Roman Catholicism exists. Similarly, he may be unaware, though any Roman Catholic could have told him, that the Rosary, that most popular of all Roman Catholic devotions (is it unknown in Latin America ?) is not a means of multiplying prayers to the Virgin, but a profound psychological device for meditating on subjects taken in most cases from the most important incidents in the redemptive work of our Lord, such as His birth, agony in the garden, scourging, crowning with thorns, carrying of the cross, death, resurrection and ascension ; only the last two of the "glorious mysteries" are not wholly biblical in theme.

It is difficult to take Mr. Shaull's word for the spiritual state of Roman Catholicism in Latin America when he shows such failure to understand the inner meaning of what he sees, and when he repeats charges long proved false in one's own country. The fact is that in all my ecumenical experience I have yet to find these charges being made by any except those whom I should expect *a priori* to find difficulty in being sympathetic with Roman Catholicism, and I am reminded of my own experience as a leader of the youth delegation which visited Greece in 1951, when I discovered

that people with a strongly Protestant background, in spite of high intelligence and much Christian charity, completely failed to gain a correct understanding of Eastern Orthodoxy, which on the popular level presents some of the same stumbling blocks as Roman Catholicism. If this article is, as the author claims, the background against which the document itself must be read, I can only hope that the Federation will advise the Latin American Movements to continue ceaselessly to reconsider their attitude to Roman Catholicism, and to regard this document as a starting-point, not as a conclusion.

As your readers know, the Federation is about to embark on an extensive program of development of its work in Latin America. If the work is going to be carried on in the manner that this document indicates, the Orthodox and Anglican members of the Federation, if no others, will be most seriously disquieted, and will wonder if their membership of the Federation is not compromising principles that are fundamental for them. Moreover, perhaps I may be allowed to suggest that if recent Federation policy in Latin America means that the Latin American Movements are now to be regarded in some sense as confessional Movements, or at least to be welcomed in the Federation as avowedly Protestant Movements, the spirit if not the letter of Section C 3 of the Basis of Relationships between the S.C.M. and the Churches, as passed by Whitby, 1949, ought to involve them in a serious rethinking of their attitude to Catholicism in its non-Roman as well as Roman forms, and that to this end it would be desirable that the Federation send an Orthodox and not, as hitherto, a Reformed to visit Latin America at the earliest possible moment.

If I have written sharply, it is in no spirit of personal animosity to the Latin American leaders, whom I have never met, but whom I judge to be at least as sincere disciples of our Lord as myself. It is simply that I am convinced that while everything in their background makes it difficult for them to be sympathetic with Roman Catholicism, it is the duty of the Federation as a whole to help them towards a more ecumenical attitude, and to keep its own policy unaffected by such conditioning. If we compromise our ecumenical position in Latin America, we shall also compromise it in Europe and everywhere. It would be a mistake for the Federation to acquiesce in the present position simply because it seems the best that can now be hoped for.

WILLIAM NICHOLLS.

Dear Philippe :

I greatly appreciate your sharing with me Mr. Nicholls' letter and offering me an opportunity to say a few words in reply. One of the very important contributions of the "Catholic witness" in the Federation, to us in Latin America, is precisely this : it forces us to face the tensions under which we live and work here if we try to be more than superficially ecumenical and at the same time fulfil the mission to which we feel called.

It is unfortunate that the article on the Latin American situation should have been written by someone who has had such little and such recent contact with the Federation, and who also, after some years of life in Colombia, can easily be accused of a certain ideological taint in his thinking on the subject. For these reasons I feel that someone from the Federation should take up the issues which Mr. Nicholls raises regarding policy, but I would like to say a few words about my own position, which he attacks rather vigorously.

First of all, I regret that my article provided Mr. Nicholls, and perhaps others, with grounds for jumping at two conclusions which, whether or not they are true of me, are certainly unwarranted if applied to the Student Christian Movements in Latin America :

- i. That they do not know what Roman Catholicism is nor try seriously to understand it. As far as I have been able to discover, student groups across the continent are genuinely interested in studying Roman Catholicism and are trying to understand its inner meaning. Many of them read a great deal from the best Catholic sources, and various groups which I visited recently were making plans to study Karl Adam, Maritain, and others. Some of us, however, are constantly being forced to ask ourselves just what it means to *know* or *understand* Latin American Catholicism. To know the dogmas of the church, or to see and feel daily the total impact of the church here ? To know the exact statement of the doctrine regarding the Virgin, or to realize that for the great masses of the faithful in Latin America, she is not only considered a member of the Godhead, but the one member with whom they can intimately relate themselves ? To understand intellectually the meaning of Catholic devotion to the Passion of our Lord, or to realize that in Latin America the living Christ of the Gospels who transforms life has practically disappeared ? To know the Catholic doctrine of the Bible, or to see all that has been done for four hundred years, and is being done even today, to keep it from the people ?

2. That our student Christian groups do not "for a moment" take seriously Roman Catholicism as a Christian church. If that were true, the document under question would never have appeared, and the issue would not perturb our student groups. The sects which see in Catholicism only the anti-Christ are not disturbed by these issues. It is precisely because we do take seriously this problem that such discussion is constantly going on in the Student Christian Movements of Latin America. We do realize that the Roman Catholic Church is one of the great historic traditions of Christianity ; we know that Jesus Christ is a living reality for many of its members, and that the historic faith is to some degree preserved. But because we also cannot close our eyes to the extent of corruption, the domination of superstition, often with ecclesiastical approval, and the consequent spiritual crises in which both the great masses and the majority of intellectuals live on this continent, we cannot think simply in terms of *ecumenical* relations with Catholics, but also in terms of our *mission* as Christian students in a very concrete situation.

When we study our task in this context, many of us definitely do come to the conclusion that we "have the task of carrying on 'evangelism' among Roman Catholic students". And before we are condemned for being superficially ecumenical, we should like our critics at least to consider three factors which contribute to this attitude :

1. The nature of our student groups. The great majority of students who belong to our Movements are Protestants. Without them, the Federation would have very little work in Latin America. From these Protestants come not only the vitality of our Movements but also all of their leadership. If Roman Catholic students come to our Movements, they do not come, nor could they come, as representatives of a Roman Catholic student movement, seeking ecumenical contacts. They do not even come as loyal Roman Catholics, for their presence in our groups is a clear indication that they are not loyal enough to the church to obey it, and that they have sufficient spiritual hunger to visit a group of heretics who have been constantly and violently condemned by the church. To think of our contacts with these students primarily in terms of ecumenical relationships is little less than absurd. They do not represent the vitality of any historic tradition of the Christian Church. They usually come to our groups in search of a faith and a foundation for life. If we do not witness to them of Jesus Christ most of them will remain dissatisfied and go elsewhere. And were many of them

to join our Movements without being confronted with this evangelistic witness, our Movements would almost certainly lose their Christian character and the spiritual vitality they may now have.

I have not yet met a single Roman Catholic student who attended a meeting of our groups who did not come looking for something which he did not find in his own church. And in the few instances on the continent in which local units of our Student Christian Movements failed to do an evangelistic task with such students, the state of these groups is sad indeed.

2. The fact that the great mass of students in the universities have no religious faith (though they were certainly baptized in the Catholic Church), are spiritually lost and are struggling to find something that will fill the vacuum.

This fact has been so emphasized in any serious study of the Latin American situation, published recently by Catholics, Protestants, or others, that I hardly see any point in even mentioning it. But it might be well to remember that not only are these students completely outside the church, not only are they untouched by any dynamic presentation of Christian thought and life, but what is still worse, many of them are so anticlerical that they would hardly look to the Roman Catholic Church for orientation if it did have something to offer them.

As a consequence, two powerful forces in Brazil, at least, are trying to exploit this situation: the communists and the spiritualists. Communism presented the one live option to satisfy the spiritual and intellectual hunger of a whole generation of students here, and still has tremendous appeal. Spiritualism has in a few years grown into a movement which claims more than eleven million members in this country of fifty million people, and has appealed especially to young, disoriented intellectuals and professionals. I wonder what Mr. Nicholls would have us do in this situation. Should we sit back quietly and do nothing to evangelize, because these students are already members of a "Christian church"? As for our student groups facing this fact, they are more and more coming to the conclusion that evangelism must be their primary passion. The question here is not that of making Catholics into Protestants, but of presenting the Christian faith to those who have no faith at all.

3. Finally, in our total situation we are constantly driven to a problem which is much more serious: is it not possible that a time may come when a church in the Christian tradition has departed so far from the Gospel, has become so horribly corrupted and shows such little possibility of reform from within, that those who take

their Christian faith most seriously are driven to the conclusion that they must passionately present a different interpretation of Christianity and evangelize those who are members of that traditional Christian group?

I know that the suggestion of such an ultimate possibility is most shocking to Mr. Nicholls and to any who share his position. It was once quite shocking to many of us who originally came from other parts of the world. Therefore, if we adopt it, it is not because of any one particular factor, but only as a consequence of serious thought about the total religious situation here.

It certainly would not be warranted simply because we feel that the Roman Church has fallen into doctrinal error. None of us would claim that we have grasped the whole truth of Jesus Christ, nor that the doctrine of our church is free from error. It would not be warranted just because Roman Catholicism is so terribly corrupt, for all ecclesiastical movements tend to be corrupted to some degree by human sin.

Nor would we urge this possibility simply because Roman Catholicism has lost the masses here and left them in such a critical spiritual situation. For this is more or less true in some other areas of the world where other Christian movements, including our own, are dominant.

However, when these three factors all combine within the rigid, inflexible structure of Latin American Catholicism, which damns, when it does not try to exterminate, all those who present a different interpretation of Christian faith, and for which, as Mr. Nicholls well observes, any attempt to work for reformation or renewal from within can "only spell disloyalty or heresy", it is then that we must seriously consider this ultimate possibility. For, as we try to know the will of the Lord for us in this total situation, we are more and more led to the conclusion that the hope of meeting the deep religious crisis of Latin America lies in the development of a strong and vital Protestantism. If Mr. Nicholls or anyone else can show us other signs of real hope, we would certainly be only too happy to consider them. But until that day comes, we do not see any other alternative to dynamic evangelistic witness.

RICHARD SHAULL.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN TRAVEL DIARY

MARIE-JEANNE DE HALLER

A few hours later and garlanded with roses I was being entertained by the Devanesan family and Harry Daniel at Madras Christian College, Tambaram. The bungalow of Chandran and Savitri Devanesan was for the next weeks to be our headquarters as well as the home to which I returned from my frequent journeyings, as it has been the home of countless students. It is not by chance that Chandran is one of the leaders in the work of the University Commission in India, for in their daily living of their faith they have made their home a centre of Christian witness. At Tambaram I was present at rehearsals for a college festival (the Indians are very gifted in the dramatic art) and at discussions of theology and politics, and I also witnessed the daily cooking of rice for the mid-day meal of two hundred and thirty children in a village near by in which the S.C.M. does a great deal of work — and the background to all this was the Devanesan home.

The truth of the Gospel

The college itself, one of the finest I saw in India, was to be the setting for our Federation conference, thanks to the generous welcome of Principal Boyd. It was in his house that Stanley Samartha and I worked furiously for a week at the Bible studies for Kottayam (watched from the wall by the delicate lizards as they flitted about after the flies), and marvelled anew at the drama of the Redemption. Indeed, all that I was to see of rural life in India and Pakistan was to deepen as never before my realization of the meaning of the Incarnation. As I walked through these little villages with their huts of clay or palm leaves, rubbing shoulders with the old folk in the streets and looking down on the paralytics who lay stretched on their string beds in the sun, or behind me at the blind or the lepers who followed demanding alms, all the stories of the Gospel flooded into my mind. I seemed suddenly to be living in the days of the New Testament and all but expected to see Jesus Christ Himself in the act of performing a miracle or of talking with one of the women who — like the Samaritan woman — passed to and from the well with their water pots. I had never before been so

overcome by the truth of the Gospel. Things that seem strange to us in our Western world where life is so different from life in Palestine seem quite obvious here. To people whose life is so simple and so primitive the only manner in which God could possibly make Himself known as He is — a God who cares for them — would be by coming to live among them, and to share their life. A God who by becoming man, wholly man, gives a new dignity to human beings who have been dragged down by poverty almost as low as the beast. A God who can strike without cruel irony at the very centre of daily misery, raising the sick out of their passive resignation, uncovering secret sins, because He knows this life of men from having once shared it, and because He has the power to liberate them from it. Nothing but the Gospel of Jesus Christ which restores his eternal value to each of these human beings can reach the heart of the drama. Social betterment and economic education are necessary, it is true. But without the miracle of the Incarnation, which means that Jesus Christ is present in each of these beings and gives each an infinite value, they would remain for us but an anonymous mass — with improved conditions of life, no doubt, but not men and women whom God loves individually. Jesus Christ is truly the Saviour because He became one of us and thus allows us to become truly men and women. It had never struck me before so strongly that if Christianity was only "a way of life", an ideal however noble, it would be no more than cruel and abominable irony. The only answer to the misery which faces one at every step and revolts one is that God did not look on it with distaste, did not see its picturesqueness while He distributed alms in condescending pity, but that He came to share it, came to give these waifs a human face which we can once more love.

Rangoon

After certain difficulties with visas and considerable delay on the part of our airplane, we landed at Rangoon in the warm, moist fog which characterizes the end of a monsoon. Dr. Hla Bu, Ma Aye Thwin and Kyaw Than had passed the small hours of the night in waiting for me at the airport and came smiling to greet me at half past three in the morning! The building that once was Judson College (Baptist) is now the state university, but the chapel still stands in the very middle of the campus, and the activities of the S.C.M. are divided between it and the bungalow of the Eastmans (he is the chaplain to the university provided by the American Baptist mission). Morning services and Sunday evening worship,

fellowship hours, discussion groups, deck tennis and other activities fill their program. The first thing that struck me was that here I was in a totally different world from India. This was a country which had been ravaged by war (Mandalay, which I visited with Kyaw Than, is ninety per cent destroyed), a country too where one feels oneself very near China and its civilization, at least for someone like myself who had never been there. I was conscious of a long tradition of refinement in the habits of every day, and it would be impossible for me to describe the diversity and the delicacy of the dishes which make up a Burmese meal!

It is not easy for a Westerner, who is accustomed to the rapid pace and the lack of considerateness of our breathless civilization (if one may still call it a civilization), to adapt himself immediately to the mentality of people who attach more importance to politeness and good manners than to the flight of time and to maintaining a fixed schedule. I had never before thought of myself as of a type to put efficiency before everything else, even to the detriment of human relations, and my real "unbusinesslikeness" has often played me tricks in my work, but in Burma I saw myself suddenly as a caricature of the over-administrative type of mind which sometimes threatens the spirit of our organizations. It was not a question of a conflict between efficiency and inefficiency, but rather of different mental attitudes which, until they are recognized for what they are, sometimes create serious misunderstanding and give rise to criticisms which are too superficial. It must have every bit as withering an effect upon an Oriental to come and work in Europe — not to mention in America — as it is disorientating and frustrating for an Occidental to adapt himself to the rhythm of the Orient. But it is only such a two-way traffic which will help us to discover the riches of traditions which are new to us and to understand the needs and the aspirations which are like our own. The Church and the S.C.M. need to be more imaginative in this whole realm. On the one hand excessive zeal and organization prevent our having time to understand and to love; while on the other, through lack of some kind of discipline, gentleness and accommodatingness by themselves bear little fruit.

The charm of Burma

There is no question about the charm of Burma. On every hand were huts of bamboo which is at the same time light and solid, with families sitting on the balconies cross-legged (sometimes even on chairs!). In the streets passed carriers of water, of fruit, or of

pots balanced gracefully on the two ends of a bamboo pole which they bore over their shoulder. Here were countrymen under their broad, flat hats of bark, city folk with parasols of many-coloured silk or oiled paper, intermingling with Buddhist monks of shaven head and saffron robe, and with pretty Burmese women, flowers decorating their chignons. Ten days in Burma were not enough for me to come to know the country any more than were three months in India! In fact I could only get an impression of the complex problems facing this young republic. The population is very mixed: Indians and Chinese, in addition to the different peoples of Burma itself — Burmans, Karens, Chins, Ketchins and so forth — people of the plains and people of the mountains, each with their own costumes, mentalities and tongues. The difficulties of communication between the different regions, as well as the constant guerilla warfare, make the task of maintaining contact extremely difficult for the Christians. A study of the map in the headquarters of the Baptist mission quickly convinced me of this. The great golden pagoda which dominates Rangoon and the hundreds of begging monks proclaim loudly that this is a Buddhist country. Mandalay, the old capital and seat of the emperor, though unfortunately wholly destroyed by fire, has still an overwhelming number of pagodas, large and small, abandoned or in use. In the principal pagoda thin leaves of gold, such as the faithful tirelessly stick on the mantle of the meditating Buddha, were offered for sale. The interior of this temple presents a strange scene for it is a market of all kinds of tourist articles — lacquer goods, bags, sandals, bracelets, baskets, as well as statues for worship. Before the Buddha we saw several of the faithful prostrate in adoration, completely dead to the surrounding hurly-burly, to an extent that one can scarcely imagine in the West. It is not surprising that they find it difficult to believe that we Christians are really worshipping when they see us peacefully seated in our churches or at the most kneeling or standing. And yet the common hall of the monastery which I had the privilege of visiting had none of the atmosphere of devotion which I was expecting. Surrounded by the colour photographs of a T.W.A. calendar, unkempt and charming monks offered us cups of cocoa and even produced the mascot which they no doubt take with them on their begging expeditions — a cat which they had taught to do somersaults. Here again I lamented my incapacity to talk the language and thus to get beyond surface impressions. I should very much have liked to accept the invitation of one of the monks to attend his service at the prison on the following day. As far as I could make out it was to contain a sermon. Indeed, the newspapers are full of criticisms

against the decadence of the state religion and declare the necessity of an ordered religious reformation to keep pace with the national renewal.

Sunday morning we climbed the ladder-like stairs in the spacious bamboo bungalow which serves as the Baptist Church of Kamayut. We left our sandals with the others at the bottom, and sat cross-legged on mats during the very simple service, which included a sermon in Burmese on "He must increase but I must decrease". The preacher wore one of the customary rose silk ceremonial bonnets, and spoke earnestly to a congregation whose members continually fanned themselves in the stifling heat. It is not to be wondered at that they aspire to a larger church! But later when we visited the foundations which have been laid for the new building, I thought almost wistfully that it will be difficult to recapture the same atmosphere of a meeting of the early Church in the brick edifice furnished with pews which will soon replace the attractive bungalow. I am doubtless too sensitive to external surroundings, but it will be a long time before I will forget the service at Kamayut.

M. M. Thomas and family

An hour and a quarter in a Comet, and I was once again in the world of saris and turbans, swallowed up in the indescribable crowds of Calcutta, where refugees sleep even on the sidewalks, the more fortunate among them rolled up in blankets. For at night at least it was possible to detect that winter had come. Famine in the South and West, refugees in Bengal, a role in the forefront of international politics — India has a gigantic task to perform. After several weeks I was less astonished than at first not to encounter among students the enthusiasm for political and social action which I had expected. They are overwhelmed by a feeling of helplessness, and well they might be! But there are some exceptions. In his small white-washed bungalow surrounded by banana trees in Trivandrum, M. M. Thomas has not run out of ideas — he has just produced *The Idea of a Responsible University in Asia Today*. I admired copies of the book while his three children, aged about six, three and ten months, watched this stranger with whom they would soon become so well acquainted that we were inseparable. I don't know who enjoyed most watching the small crabs crawling on the fine sand of the fairy tale beach! An unspoiled cove with golden sand, shaded by coconut palms, a few fishing boats — close relatives of Kon Tiki — drawn up on the beach, a sea of an intense blue breaking in foam as the tide came in, a dazzling sunset — I fell under

the spell of Travancore and did not wonder that its inhabitants unceasingly sing its praises. Mrs. M. M. Thomas, gracious and efficient, manages her home, raises her children, teaches physics in the university, and helps her husband by her intelligent grasp of his intellectual pursuits. She deserves to be as well known in the Federation as is M. M. himself!

"Christ, the Answer"

But the day of conferences and meetings had come, and M. M. and I climbed into the bus which was to take us through paddy fields and groves of banana trees and coconut palms to Kottayam, site of the third World Conference of Christian Youth. The inhabitants, sheltered from the burning sun beneath huge black umbrellas, watched us tirelessly as we arrived and throughout the two weeks of the meeting. It is always moving to open a conference of young people who have come from the four corners of the earth, expecting much from what they feel will be a telling experience in their lives. The very theme of Kottayam, "Christ the Answer", had led them to hope they might find there the solution to all their problems. It was hard for many of them when they discovered that Jesus Christ has no blueprint which spares us from serious thought or difficult decisions in a situation too complex for us to discern one Christian way. But more numerous were those who discovered at Kottayam that Jesus Christ is not only the founder of Christianity, but that He is living and relevant today, and that therefore we can throw ourselves into the immense task which faces responsible citizens and need not despair. At least this was the spontaneous reaction among the conference participants whom I met in the Indian universities a month or two after the conference. It is no small thing to arrive at such a conclusion in a part of the world where Christians are a ridiculously small minority and where Christianity is in disrepute because of its identification in many minds with Western culture.

By now readers of *The Student World* will have had many opportunities to read in various papers and magazines reports and reactions from delegates to Kottayam, the W.S.C.F. conference at Madras, and the General Committee¹, so I will not dwell on them here.

¹ See the *Federation News Sheet*, March-April 1953.

The challenge of "traditional" Christianity

After six weeks of conferences I found myself once more in an airplane, this time on my way to Delhi, first stop on my tour of the universities of the North. When we arrived at dawn it was cold and dark, and the porters and employees at the air terminal were sleeping on the floor and on couches, so rolled up in their blankets that I at first thought they were bundles of merchandise! Day broke slowly on the broad, straight, paved streets. Had it not been for the Indians with their turbans and Kashmir shawls, I might have thought myself in Europe, or still more in America. New Delhi is the modern and international city *par excellence*. Even cows are rare! A taxi carried me through Old Delhi, past the Red Fort, which I was to visit later, to St. Stephen's College, where I was warmly welcomed by Principal Raja Ram and his wife, who is very active in a village social service project nearby, and by Professor Ramsden, a member of the staff who is interested in the S.C.M. St. Stephen's is a missionary college, as are most of those which I visited. In talking with my hosts and some students I soon recognized a problem which I had scarcely expected to find in this part of the world, but which is nevertheless acute: the existence of a traditional Christianity. The majority of third or fourth generation students are Christians simply because their families are, and because as a result they belong to a specific social class. In a country where society is divided into watertight compartments, it is very difficult to maintain the profound meaning of Christianity, for although it has cut across all casts, it has nonetheless become itself a distinct caste because of the exclusiveness of most other religious and social groups. The task of the Church and of Christian youth movements is then, on the one hand, not to let themselves solidify into one social class, and on the other, to make young people understand that the Christian faith is not just one philosophy among others, to be chosen if it happens to appeal to us, but a vital force which must penetrate every aspect of our life. Unfortunately the S.C.M. has not always succeeded in meeting this challenge, and has remained too much a small circle of Christians who enjoy meeting together, a place where boys and girls can mix naturally. (Although this last is strongly criticized, in reality the S.C.M. thus performs a real service in a rapidly changing society, where girls are being abruptly emancipated and where it is very difficult for young people of both sexes to have normal friendly contacts.) However, there are here and there young people who have grasped the heart of the Christian faith, and have gained a true vision of what the Christian witness in the university

should be. They are even ready to make sacrifices in order to bear it. Some told me that they had discovered it at Kottayam, or at the W.S.C.F. conference at Tambaram; others took new courage from the realization, thanks to these meetings (whether they participated in them or not), that they are not fighting the battle alone.

A country of contrasts

At Delhi and Agra I was to see for the first time the magnificence of Mogul architecture: the mother of pearl tints of the palaces and marble tombs, sculptured with the symbols of all the religions of India in a desperate effort at synthesis, encrusted with many-coloured flowers and birds in semi-precious stones, or finely carved to look like cast-iron screens. I could have believed myself living the tales of the *Thousand and One Nights*. Even the name of the little "Pearl Mosk" in Delhi is no exaggeration. How I longed to spend more time watching the play of light, and absorbing slowly the varied impressions made by this world, on the one hand grandiose and silent, on the other noisy, miserable and filthy. If India is a country of startling contrasts for the superficial traveller, it is even more so for those who pause to think of the waves of civilization which have passed over it. The task of the government, which must hold together these diverse elements, is immense — climate, food, culture, architecture, language, clothes and people, all are so very different in the North and South.

Women in Islam

It was also at Delhi that I first saw veiled women, promenading beneath their draperies of thick white cotton with only a peephole for their eyes, and with heavy bracelets on their ankles and rings on their toes. In the airplane which took me to Lahore I sat beside a mysterious black phantom with three children, one of them an infant. When the baby began to cry she raised her veil and revealed a lovely young face. Several days later I found myself in a railway compartment with a beauty veiled in bright rose satin, escorted by her mother or a worthy chaperon. And it was doubtless well that she was accompanied, for never have I seen such a collection of jewels — sapphires, rubies, diamonds — and I wondered how the poor soul could do anything, her hands were so weighed down by jewelry. She was probably the favourite of three or four wives of a rich man, whose sole *raison d'être* was to charm him. Never have I felt so comfortable in my dusty travelling clothes! There was no

possible doubt that I was in the midst of Islam. In every village, no matter how small, picturesque white minarets reached towards the sky like the arms of the faithful in prayer. A long trip by autobus between Sialkot and Rawalpindi gave me a glimpse of the "bad lands" of this country, where herds of sheep wander under the care of shepherds carrying their crooks, who, as they warm themselves around a fire, make a picture even more biblical than the long caravans of camels which one meets constantly.

In this country which brings to mind the life of the patriarchs the universities and colleges seem strangely modern. Kinnaird College at Lahore could almost be an American girls' school. Once through the gates of the campus, no more veils, even for Mohammedans, who ride bicycles and participate in sports such as badminton with the others, and seem to be preparing themselves for the life of modern career women. I was never able to discover how such girls react psychologically when they must become the submissive wives of their lords and masters, and can never appear in public unveiled. I was not long enough in Pakistan to discover what possibilities for an independent life, other than in the teaching profession, there are for those girls who do not marry. For Christians the question of their future is a difficult one, for the fact of being a Christian is not a particular recommendation in finding a job in a Mohammedan country, even if the government has not taken officially a negative attitude towards them.

The S.C.M. of Pakistan

The great difficulty for the S.C.M. and its branches is their isolation. The young people are hungry for contact with the outside world, especially when they discover that there are other countries in the world where to be a Christian is neither normal nor favourably regarded. My dream is that the Federation may be able to send a visitor to spend at least a month in Pakistan. I unfortunately only had the time to make a lightning visit, and was not able to sit down and work out with the students a program suitable to the situation and needs of the groups, which are often poor in leadership. Nevertheless their summer camps seem to have been successful, and as I am writing this Travel Diary the work camp in the mountains which they were planning at the time of my visit must be in full swing. I am sure that if we do not abandon Pakistan to its isolation, the S.C.M. can be the kind of place of joyful witness which is so much needed by young people, weighed down as they are by the Great Unknown of their future.

Everywhere I was welcomed in a most moving way. I will long remember the group of students who presented me, on my departure from Rawalpindi, with a lovely Pakistani costume made especially for me, and a pair of beautiful leather sandals (too small, alas, for my huge Western feet, even though they had combed the city to find the largest pair! However, my small niece now wears them with great pride.)

February in Pakistan corresponds to early springtime in Switzerland: trees bare of leaves, with here and there to my surprise some flowering peach trees. In the valley of the Ganges, however, I was to find summer again (the end of winter for them), with superb roses everywhere. Lucknow, Allahabad and the crowds of the faithful bathing in the sacred river, Jabalpur, Nagpur — I would need a whole issue of *The Student World* to describe it all — not to mention the jungle of Kipling, with its gamboling monkeys, which I crossed by autobus. At Bombay I was met again by the faithful friends who had worked so hard for the General Committee. But the time had come to leave this fascinating country and all those who, everywhere I had been, had made of my stay a joy to my heart as well as to my eyes. I have often been told that anyone who has been in Asia holds always a nostalgic longing to return. How true this is!

BOOK REVIEWS

JOHN R. MOTT, ARCHITECT OF COOPERATION AND UNITY, by Galen M. Fisher. Association Press, New York.

This book is a timely study of one aspect of John R. Mott's many-sided life of service — his contribution to cooperation and unity. The study has never before been undertaken as a whole: Galen Fisher pursues the unitive aspects and results of Dr. Mott's activities through certain of its phases with which Basil Mathews has already made us familiar in his *John R. Mott, World Citizen*: he demonstrates convincingly how Mott's share in creating first modern interdenominational and then interconfessional movements, his lifelong devotion and consecration to the missionary purpose of the Church, his skill in recruiting and training leaders, his ability to discover and make use of financial resources, his connection with the origins of the World Council of Churches, and many of his personal characteristics and qualities have all become tributary streams to that most marked feature of Christendom today, the swelling river of Christian cooperation and unity. The author brings out many points which have already been noted in various histories, Canon Tatlow's *Story of the Student Christian Movement* in Britain, Richey Hogg's *Ecumenical Foundations*, and my history of *The World's Student Christian Federation*, but he calls attention to many new ones. He makes us realize how large a part Dr. Mott will be shown to have played throughout the twentieth century up-to-date in the *History of the Ecumenical Movement*, when the extensive study of that subject being prepared by the World Council of Churches sees the light next spring.

Mr. Fisher handles his subject attractively by showing the impact of John R. Mott on personalities: the book is full of personal testimonies gathered from letters of inquiry or interviews with men and women of nations and races all over the world. A strong point is his healthy determination to show weaknesses or failures as well as strengths and achievements, though perhaps a certain difficulty in finding material has caused him to dwell on weaknesses in spheres of Dr. Mott's activities which have little to do with cooperation and unity.

This reviewer has long cherished a hope that perhaps in another life she might hear St. Paul and John R. Mott comparing their

experiences as world travellers and workers in, say, methods to be used in entering new cities, in choosing fellow workers, in dealing with sinners among Christians, in keeping in touch with places already visited; and was greatly pleased to find that the closing chapter of the book is devoted to comparing and contrasting these two under the title of "An Ancient and a Modern World Missionary".

The book has one decided weakness, which, it is only fair to point out, is not the author's fault. Owing to severe pressure for an early date of publication, he was given no chance to read the proofs of his book, with the mortifying result that there are a considerable number of slips in the spelling of proper names and certain technical inaccuracies: for example, the head of the Anglican Communion is indexed as the "Bishop" of Canterbury. Considerable difficulty is created for the reviewer: where she differs from Mr. Fisher, as she does for example on page ten, in the distinctions which he makes between the "interdenominational" and the "inter-confessional" movements with which Dr. Mott has been identified, is she disagreeing with the author's views or with the printer's misrepresentation of those views? It is earnestly to be hoped the present edition will be speedily exhausted, and Galen Fisher given the chance to correct these inaccuracies in a second edition. This is due to him as author, and to Dr. Mott as subject, if this valuable book is to fulfil its mission.

There should be many more such specialized studies of the areas where John R. Mott has been an Architect of the Kingdom, and has laid foundations on which it will be the individual vocation of present-day members of Student Christian Movements to build. Mott himself has done much to make such building possible through one of the many interrelated phases of his life-work, a phase which curiously enough seems to have escaped the attention of everyone but the present reviewer. He has developed a technique of the preparation for and the conduct of conferences and of their chairmanship; he has developed also convictions and techniques on the release and use of money: but scarcely less a gift to the Church is his technique of record keeping, the building up of the archives of a movement, based on his tremendous conviction of the absolute necessity of records to any organization which is to live and develop. It is through the Federation in a very special way that he has made this gift. The records or archives of the Federation from 1895 to 1925 are preserved in the library of the Yale Divinity School, New Haven, under the title of the John R. Mott Library. These archives are the fruit of persistent effort year by year to secure that three copies of every report and publication of any Movement within the

Federation should be deposited at its headquarters.¹ There, in the Yale Divinity School, when writing the history of the Federation, I could work in this large, singularly complete and most carefully and systematically catalogued library: never had a historian so easy a task, so singularly free from the need of further special research. It may be doubted whether any organization, religious or secular, save possibly the World's Y.M.C.A. in Geneva, has archives so complete and well arranged as those of the Federation in its first thirty years: it is devoutly to be hoped that in the other areas where Dr. Mott has laid great foundations, the International Missionary Council, for example, the archives are as carefully and fully preserved. It is his convictions and practice on archives which have made possible the invaluable collection of source material, which he has given us in the six volumes of *Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott*.

Every library of every branch of any Student Christian Movement should have Galen Fisher's book, and build up round it a little John R. Mott Library of its own.

Galen Fisher, by the way, takes more pains than other historians to record any share which women have taken in movements of cooperation and unity. And the book is dedicated to the "Memory of Leila White Mott for sixty-one years comrade, counselor, inspirer and traveling companion of her husband, John R. Mott, in service for the Kingdom throughout the world".

RUTH ROUSE.

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND NATURAL SCIENCE, and THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC WORLD VIEW, by Karl Heim, translated into English by Neville Horton Smith. S.C.M. Press, London.

The translation of these volumes into English will be a salutary reminder to Anglo-Saxon readers that in addition to the breakdown of communication between science and religion, with which we are all too familiar, there is also an increasingly tragic breakdown in mutual understanding between Continental and Anglo-Saxon philosophy. This reviewer must confess that the existentialist language of these books is so unfamiliar to English ears, so different as to make it very difficult to know whether the point of the argument is always being grasped.

Professor Heim is quite clear in his statement of the problem and in his assessment of its importance. The violent transformations of

¹ See RUTH ROUSE, *The World's Student Christian Federation*, pp. 87-88.

our attitude to the natural world brought about by four centuries of natural science, from the revolutionary cosmology of Copernicus to modern psychology of religion, make it inevitable that discussion between Christianity and the scientifically-educated world will go on, whatever Protestant theology may say about the necessary dichotomy of nature and grace. The fundamental question for religion now is not this or that point of dogma, or even the existence of God *versus* a militant atheism, but the question of whether any philosophy other than secularism is possible at all, given the scientific world-view which, in practice, we all accept. And this is not only a question between the Church and the world, but one which deeply affects the minds of believers themselves. No-one who is in touch with the secularist attitude of our universities is likely to dispute this, and nothing but praise can be given to Professor Heim's program for tackling the situation. Most apologetic, he says, has tried to build on the contemporary state of science, and to go forward from that basis to faith. But this is dangerous because it makes faith too dependent on the variable currents of scientific opinion. What we want is a base planted firmly out of reach of scientific criticism, from which we can build again an over-all conception of reality, which will include the accepted results of science, but will combat the assumptions of scientific secularism.

It is when he goes on to carry out this program that Professor Heim will provoke controversy. In the first volume he suggests two points of departure which are outside the reach of objective scientific thinking, but which nevertheless lead to interpretations of the whole of reality. The first of these is the non-objective ego, the "I" which is the subject of all (my) experience, but which finds itself up against a host of other egos all claiming the same centrality in their respective worlds. Thus all events can be interpreted as encounters and conflicts between these subjects, or I-Thou encounters, to use the language of Martin Buber. Professor Heim uses the analogy of two distinct but interpenetrating mathematical spaces to express the fact that the scientific account of the world and the I-Thou account are both equally valid interpretations of *all* events (he allows Thou-encounters with the non-human and inorganic world, as for instance in natural magic), but that they are independent of one another. In a similar way, and this is our other point of departure from beyond science, there is a third "space" (called "suprapolar space") in which God is seen as the ground of all things and in which the conflicts between self-sufficient and self-centred egos may be transcended. This analogy of abstract spaces needs careful handling, but it may be helpful to some people: suprapolar space, for example, is an

attempt to make words like "transcendent" and "supernatural" intelligible in modern scientific language.

The second volume has the mainly negative apologetic purpose of showing that the transformation of ideas in modern science has been a dethronement of those absolutes which have been the idols, or pseudo-gods, of scientific secularism. Three of these absolutes are discussed in detail: the absolute object which is independent of the experimenter, absolute space and time, and absolute determinism of natural events. Now that purely mechanical explanations have been shown to be inadequate in physics, none of these absolutes retains its validity, and it is demonstrated that science must stop short of the assertion of any absolutes, and therefore that science is not self-sufficient. A new outlook on the problem of miracles and on the origin of life follows from this, and in the last chapter it is refreshing to find a theologian coming down on the side of the continuity of inorganic substances with simple organisms, instead of seeking religious capital in supernatural explanations of the origin of life.

This is not the place for detailed criticisms, but it must be recorded that Professor Heim fails to carry conviction at the points in his argument where he accepts too literally the pictorial language of modern physics. Thus, statements about the essential involment of the observer in his experiments have to be taken with a great deal of reserve, and it is not at all clear that they give any sanction to a Kantian interpretation of experience, nor to the idea of encounter with a "Thou" in nature in Buber's sense. Again, uncritical acceptance of statements about the dualism of particle and wave in fundamental physics lead to arguments which would look very different in the light of a clearer understanding of the function of mathematics in describing non-picturable physical concepts like photons, electrons, abstract spaces and the rest. The absence of any discussion about the status in reality of these concepts means that the reader is left confused about the relevance to the main argument of long passages in the second volume which describe modern physical theories.

On the theological side, this reviewer finds little that is distinctively Christian in either book, but perhaps this comment is unfair, since these are only two volumes out of the six published in German.

In spite of these criticisms, which would have to be more severe in a philosophical context, the books are to be welcomed as a strenuous attempt, from the side of theology, to grapple with the problem of communication with a scientific age. There are many excellent things here which may provide fruitful material for discussion between

theologians and scientists, if the theologians are not too uncritical, and the scientists not too impatient. The translation reads very well, and preserves what must have been a vigorous and sometimes moving style in the original. Two minor points: the ugly "quantum-ed" should be "quantised", and "electronic microscope" should be "electron microscope".

MARY HESSE.

THE REINTEGRATION OF THE CHURCH, by Nicholas Zernov. S.C.M. Press, London.

Dr. Zernov writes of the possibilities of the reintegration of the Church from the point of view of one most preoccupied with relations between Orthodoxy and Anglicanism. His own ecumenical work, as an Orthodox layman domiciled first in Paris and later in England, has lain mostly with the Fellowship of SS. Alban and Serbius, that most creative Anglican-Orthodox society, founded by the S.C.M.s of Great Britain and Russia for the practice of ecumenism on a bilateral basis, and thus with an intensity of fervour born of kinship and mutual understanding. His point of view is now so common in ecumenical literature that we cannot expect him to say many things that will seem novel to us all. In this he invites comparison with the much larger canvas on which our beloved friend, Professor Zander, has given us the fruits of his ecumenical experience in *Vision and Action*. The similarities between the works of the two Russian Orthodox lay professors are as instructive as the differences. We must in both cases observe at the outset the consequences of the fact that neither is by primary training and outlook a theologian. We shall find in each many things that a theologian, and especially an Orthodox theologian, would have said differently; neither book can be taken as evidence for the view of Orthodox *theologians* on ecumenical problems. This need not lessen the value of their work, if we take them on their own merits as individuals who have something to say to us, which comes out of a long experience of the very problems we ourselves meet with. Dr. Zernov is much the more radical of the two in his approach to the ecumenical problem. Professor Zander does not see any hope of unity in history, perhaps because he sees no hope of everyone becoming Orthodox, which would be for him the only way in which unity could come about. Dr. Zernov hopes very concretely for unity, and suggests controlled intercommunion as the means towards it, a method that would shock Professor Zander as much as it will shock the Orthodox

theologians themselves. Dr. Zander assumes — correctly in our view, but in flat contradiction to Orthodox theology — that the Church is divided, and in suggesting means for its reintegration does not bring forward the one which would spring first to the mind of any Orthodox theologian, chimerical though it is, namely, that we should all accept the teaching of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church, the sole true Church. He clearly envisages the reintegration of the Church in quite different and more realistic terms; although he believes that the Orthodox Church holds “the box with the healing gifts” (p. 102), still the “key is in the hands of the west” (*ibid.*).

Further, and equally startling from the point of view of Orthodox theology, he is not afraid to advocate intercommunion as the means of reintegration. For this above all else in his book he will probably be attacked by Orthodox and some Anglican theologians, but it is doubtful if the attackers will stop to notice what is distinctive about his proposals. For it seems to the reviewer that this is not just another advocacy of intercommunion, of the kind with which we are so familiar in the Federation. It is distinctive in coming from one who by background and training comes from the opposite camp, and behind Dr. Zernov is the theological power of the late Father Bulgakov. And we suspect that this is the part of his book that Dr. Zernov has really pondered and agonized over. For the rest of the book is simply an introduction to ecumenical work, relatively slight in character, and in hardly any way (except the author's Eastern viewpoint) more significant than a score of similar works, including several of Dr. Zernov's own. The author lays the greatest stress on non-theological (especially cultural and psychological) factors in division: this is a healthy reaction, but in our view he seriously underestimates the importance of the theological factors — for example, when he says of the Reformation on page forty: “The revolt was started at first not so much against the teaching of the Church as against the mishandling of spiritual and temporal power concentrated in the hands of the hierarchy. The theological issues were added later, in order to justify refusal to obey the Roman Pontiff and his agents. The cardinal problem raised by the Reformation was the prerogative of the Bishop of Rome, and on this point the unity of the Western Church was wrecked.” Such a statement might be true of the English Reformation, though even here it might need qualification, but hardly of the Continental one. Should it not be said rather that the cardinal problem raised by the Reformation was the theological one of the nature of the Gospel, and that it was only when satisfaction could not be obtained on

this point that an ecclesiastical breach became inevitable? In fact, the practical abuses were largely reformed by the Roman Church itself, whereas the doctrinal issue was further hardened by the Counter-Reformation. Similarly, Dr. Zernov's reversal of the traditional estimate of the role of St. Athanasius in the Arian controversy leads to surprising results, and seems to require more scholarly justification than is here afforded, if it is to overthrow the received view. While it is undoubtedly true that we have all neglected the importance of non-theological factors in the origin and perpetuation of schism, Dr. Zernov is surely rash to go to the other extreme and push theological factors into the background in order to magnify the non-theological ones. The peculiar importance and difficulty of the non-theological factors is that they operate precisely in and through theological controversies, both generating and giving divisive power to disagreement on strictly theological issues. That incidentally is part of the reason why we cannot overlook the task of regaining theological unity; good-will is not enough. On the other hand, on the rare occasions when non-theological factors do operate in isolation they are much easier to deal with and overcome.

Dr. Zernov's proposal for intercommunion is apparently a revival and generalization of a proposal once put forward by Father Sergius Bulgakov and others for the Fellowship of SS. Alban and Sergius. That proposal broke down as much or more from Anglican as from Orthodox opposition, we understand, and apparently the chief difficulty felt by the Anglican theologians was that the proposal envisaged granting special privileges of intercommunion with the Orthodox Church to some Anglicans only, namely, those who were members of the Fellowship, while the rest of the Anglican Church would be excluded as before. The reviewer cannot but feel that his Anglican colleagues were right in their opposition to a proposal in these terms. Nevertheless, the breakdown of the proposal had a tragic aspect, for as Oliver Tomkins has recorded (*The Wholeness of the Church*, p. 106): "Something had died in the Fellowship with that failure, a quality in their relationship which its members have never seen again." Now Dr. Zernov revives what seems to be essentially the same proposal — he emphasizes its distinctive features — as a general contribution to the ecumenical movement. He too envisages that only a group in each church shall enjoy intercommunion, and thinks that this must be the work of pioneers dedicated to and trained for ecumenical work. We grant that in practice only such persons would have the opportunity to avail themselves of arrangements for intercommunion, but we cannot see any justification for the *deliberate* restriction of intercommunion to a small group.

Intercommunion is a relationship between churches, not individuals. Secondly, Dr. Zernov makes it clear that ecclesiastical sanction would be necessary on both sides. This condition is certainly essential, if intercommunion is to be in any way creative of better relations between the churches concerned, and indeed if it is to be spiritually feasible at all, though it is often forgotten by those who make such proposals in the Federation. It does not seem to be clear who ought to give the sanction. Attempts to establish intercommunion between Anglicans and Orthodox have so far failed, not so much upon doctrinal grounds as on account of the Orthodox tendency to require the permission of so high an authority that it either cannot be got to meet in the present world situation, or (in the case of an Ecumenical Council) has today no more than an ideal existence. For Anglicans the answer is clearer. Sanction can be given by a Provincial Synod or Convocation; it would be readily given if the church in question were the Orthodox, but in other cases... the story is too well known to need repetition. Dr. Zernov apparently puts forward his proposal as a general one, but since all his concrete arguments refer to intercommunion between nearly allied confessional families, such as Anglicans and Orthodox, Lutherans and Calvinists, he gives us no help in overcoming the difficulties which Anglicans commonly feel about non-episcopal churches. But his proposal would not go far to realize its proclaimed object of curing division, if it could not bridge that gulf. The third condition proposed by Dr. Zernov is "corporate sacramental repentance" as a preliminary and a preparation for intercommunion. Here he seems to be on surer ground. He rightly points out that no-one at present uses intercommunion as a *cure for division*, even those who practice it on principle, and that this failure is to be associated with lack of penitence for division. Those who prefer theological discussion as a means to a unity which is to be crowned by intercommunion "expect to restore unaided what the abuse of man's freedom has undermined" (p. 66). The partisans of general intercommunion despair of doctrinal unity, think disunity into different churches something normal, and "evade the question of (theological) repentance" (p. 67). The kind of intercommunion here proposed is to be distinguished from such general or particular sacramental hospitality; it involves an agreement between two churches, who both repent for the sins of disunity, to seek the doing away of hatred and prejudice and the growth of unity in doctrine through the grace of the Eucharist to be given to both for this purpose through intercommunion. It is certainly a valuable suggestion that such penitence should somehow be formally and concretely embodied in a liturgical act, though his actual phrase,

"corporate sacramental repentance", may be difficult to give meaning to outside the context of a "catholic" church life.

As they stand, these proposals are clearly open to various kinds of criticism. But we think that they should be studied, and improved on if necessary, and that no-one should evade their challenge by the simple method of describing them as un-Orthodox, or un-Catholic. For if by our common baptism we are all made members of the eschatological unity of the Church, the one Body of Christ whose unity can never be broken, and if all Christian churches who practice baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity are able to mediate this unity, why may not those who are acknowledged to be members of the same Body have communion together? I used to think that a satisfactory answer could be given to this question in terms of the need for the unity of the visible Church. But now, although I am no less convinced of the need for historical unity, I am not so sure that the refusal of intercommunion can be satisfactorily defended, and I doubt if anyone else who accepts the premise of the question can give a satisfactory answer. It is indeed open to members of Dr. Zernov's communion, though not I think any other, to deny that the question can be put in that form. But once it is admitted that there is one Body and that the members of the churches with whom we are in ecumenical fellowship are members of it through their baptism, the burden of proof is heavily on the close communionist.

WILLIAM NICHOLLS

SCIENTISM, MAN AND RELIGION, by D.R.G. Owen. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. \$3.50.

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce this book and its author to the readers of *The Student World*. It is the first considerable work by a member of a group of younger Canadian theologians who have appeared since the war and in whom I rest very high hopes. Derwyn Owen, an Anglican, is the eldest son of the late Archbishop of Toronto. He studied at Toronto, Oxford and Union Theological Seminary, New York, and is now Associate Professor of Ethics and Philosophy at Trinity College and Lecturer in Philosophy of Religion in Wycliffe College, Toronto, that is, he lectures in both a High and Low Church Seminary! While at Oxford, he was seriously tempted by logical positivism and so brings to this particular philosophic error an inner understanding which is well revealed in his book. Doubtless his sojourn in the bleak desert of logical positivism

contributed in some measure to impress upon his mind a distinguishing characteristic — a remarkable ability at pointed schematic analysis.

The book under review exemplifies this quality of Professor Owen's mind to a marked degree. It grew out of a course of lectures on Religious Knowledge to first year Arts students at Trinity College and delineates with clean, vigorous strokes the main streams of thought which have shaped the mind of the contemporary Western world. The author frankly admits that he has drawn liberally upon the ideas of Berdyaev, Niebuhr, Tillich and Temple. *Scientism, Man and Religion* is a lucid and readable introduction to their analysis of the climate of opinion in which the Church must operate. Further, by its razor sharpness in distinguishing facts, hypotheses and dogmas in the main world-view current in Western society, the book makes a significant contribution to Christian apologetics. Owen is as brutally direct in exposing the vapid and spurious arguments which are sometimes advanced in support of Christianity as he is in dealing with the fallacious arguments of Marxism and humanism. This is altogether healthy, leaving the reader squarely up against the fact that we live by faith, and that though the Christian faith can in no wise be *logically* demonstrated, it is not unreasonable — indeed, it is more reasonable than its live alternatives.

Most welcome is Owen's positive attitude to science which, unhappily, is too rare among contemporary theologians. The contribution of the physical sciences in improving man's living conditions, of the social sciences including the work of Marx, and of psychology including the work of Freud, is repeatedly acknowledged. However, the beneficent principles of science when absolutized into universal dogmas become evil and form the basis of what Owen calls "scientism" or "scientolatry".

Perhaps the most striking and challenging feature of this book is the vividness with which it shows that communism, nazism and capitalism have a vast body of false assumptions in common. "Western culture with its secularism, standardization, and commercialism, and communist society, with its atheism, regimentation and economism are blood brothers and children of that same 'scientific' tradition of thought and life that has been the prevailing influence in the whole modern period of history."

In the final chapter, the author maintains that the reconciliation of science and religion is only possible in terms of the Christian faith. In defending this statement, Owen considers the main characteristics of science and shows how they are undergirded and transfigured by Christian doctrine. Though very brief, the argument here is most cogent, and for an age which rightly places a high value

on science this concluding chapter suggests a positive approach to an effective Christian apologetic.

Though this book contains no radically new ideas, because of its lucidity and comprehensiveness I commend it with enthusiasm to anyone who wants to understand the modern world and the climate of opinion in Russia and the Western world in which the Gospel must be preached. It should be required reading for every science student and professor in the Federation and will, I hope, be widely used in local study groups throughout the world.

SCIENCE AND THE CHRISTIAN MAN, by C. E. Raven. S.C.M. Press, London. 4s. 6d.

This is a reprint of six talks given on the Home Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation and exemplifies Canon Raven's usual vivid and interesting style. The first five chapters deal with Science and (1) Religious Experience, (2) Jesus Christ, (3) the Trinity, (4) Creation, and (5) the Historical Process. The final chapter is entitled "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in a Scientific Age".

A. JOHN COLEMAN.

CHRISTIANITY IN EUROPEAN HISTORY, by Herbert Butterfield. Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, London. 5s.

The Riddell Memorial Lectures are an annual series of lectures delivered in King's College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, University of Durham. This was the twenty-third of the series, delivered in 1951, and the lecturer was Herbert Butterfield, Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, known to most readers of *The Student World* through his book, *Christianity and History*.

According to the lecturer, "The purpose of the whole series was to examine a possible interpretation of the part played by Christianity itself, as well as by ecclesiastical systems, in the making of our world; and particularly to seize upon those influences which spring from the nature of the religion itself — the things which could hardly have been the same if our civilization had developed under the presidency of Islam, for example."

Professor Butterfield attempts this in the course of three lectures, each of which is packed with conclusions, which take one through a quick sweep of the role of Christianity in Europe since the first century A.D. In the first lecture, entitled "The Making of Christendom",

the author surveys the functions of religion in society, and the factors which favoured the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire, together with the results. He then goes on to show the effects of the barbarian invasion and the emergence of a second Christendom and a Europe. In the last section of this lecture he speaks about the Christian civilization, the role of the Church in education, and the Christianizing influence of the Church in society. He ends by drawing parallels between modern communism and the Christianity of the post-classical period. The whole lecture is not a mere narration of facts, but a critical evaluation of that period.

The second lecture is entitled "Christianity and Western Civilization". The author traces here how during the time of Constantine Christianity began to develop as a religion of the State, how under the barbarian invasion it appears more clearly as the cement of society, and how in the medieval period there is a return to Christianity as a gospel for individual souls — all this seen in the monastic movement, the multiplicity of its saints and missionaries, the achievements of the friars in the field of scholarship and also the religious work among the common people. He shows the emergence of the autonomy of the "spiritual principle" in this period. His next section is devoted to the role which Christianity accorded to human conscience, and the respect for human personality. But he also points out how the Church refused to accept this principle when it acquired a majority position and had the power to persecute. He then shows that the closing decades of the seventeenth century are the period of the great secularization in thought and society, and how the Church, which in the Middle Ages asserted its leading position in the face of the new learning of the Arabians, found itself gravely embarrassed by the scientific movement of the seventeenth century. And passing into the eighteenth century and on to the present day, he shows how "the State ceased to be effectively a unified Christian society, a politico-religious unit, a biblical commonwealth; and the churches tended to become mere voluntary societies with a body politic which came to be regarded as secular, and which was increasingly neutral in religious matters." He also shows that certain qualities in Western civilization that are regarded as Christian were achieved when the leadership of society had passed from the Church, and sometimes even when ecclesiastical systems were the chief obstruction to surmount. He ends this lecture by seeing some of the Christian ideals in a secularized society and shows that Christianity under these conditions was at times revolutionary and at times conservative.

The last lecture is on "History, Religion and Ethics". Here the author studies first the relation of ethics to religion and society and

speaks of the dangers of a "crude, moralistic approach" in judging issues like communism, and the need for building what he calls a "system of credit". By this "credit system", Professor Butterfield thinks in terms of some kinds of virtue in society associated with the existence of a moral order, which gives one a talking point, and also a position from which to pass judgments. He then spends some time on the operation of Christian charity in history, and the need for Christian love to govern all relationships. He ends with a plea for the Christian fight for righteousness which the Church in the past has so often failed to make.

This little booklet is of extraordinary value — and our European Movements particularly will do well to read it — though the lessons we learn from it are of general value even to those outside Europe. It will make us more sober, for example, in our judgment of communism, or our too easy claims that certain virtues in Western civilization are the contribution of the Church.

HARRY DANIEL.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Great Humanists, by Lynn Harold Hough. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. \$3.50. The author presents his philosophy of Christian humanism in studies of the lives, works and influence of five great humanists, Aristotle, Cicero, Erasmus, Irving Babbitt, and Paul Elmer More. He maintains that true humanism is always Christian: "The profoundest study of man leads on to a belief in God. And in this sense humanism in its most profound and perceptive forms is inevitably the handmaid of religion."

Design for Life, by A. M. Hunter. S.C.M. Press, London. 7s. 6d. This is an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount in which the author deals with such questions as: "What is the truth about the Sermon? Was it delivered as it stands? To whom? The Church or the world? In what sense is it original? What was its place in early Christianity? Did Jesus design it as a new law to be as binding on the new Israel as the Torah had been on the old? What is its relevance and importance for us today?"

The Upward Call, by Henry David Gray. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. \$1.25. Here are twelve weeks of daily devotions based on Paul's letter to the Philippians, written expressly for high

school and college youth. Each consists of a reading from this epistle (the same passage used for an entire week), a correlated reading from another New Testament book, a brief meditation, and a closing prayer in free verse.

The Book of Job, by Anthony and Miriam Hanson. S.C.M. Press, London. 7s. 6d. A Torch Bible Commentary which deals with the date, style, structure and contents of the Book of Job, and its relation to the New Testament, as well as providing a commentary on the more important passages of the text.

Life is Commitment, by J. H. Oldham. S.C.M. Press, London. 12s. 6d. The author of this piece of Christian apologetics says that in it he has tried first "to set down in black and white what I really believe", and secondly, to build "a bridge of understanding between those who, like myself, notwithstanding many doubts and questionings, see in the Christian faith the one hope of the world and those to whom the Christian position, as they understand it, is one that they cannot accept."

Worship Services for Life Planning, by Alice A. Bays. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. \$2.50. This book contains thirty-three worship services for young people, each built around a central theme, and including prayers, hymns, poems and stories, planned to shed light on some problem which youth faces today.

Christian Missions and the Judgment of God, by David M. Paton. S.C.M. Press, London. 6s. 6d. The author, on the basis of his ten years as "a professional missionary", discusses what is to be learned about the Church's mission and for her missionary strategy by "the missionary debacle in China". The book is based on three lectures given under the titles "The Christian Mission Today", "Missions Under Judgment", and "Looking Ahead".

Anglican Public Worship, by Colin Dunlop, Dean of Lincoln. S.C.M. Press, London. 7s. 6d. A survey of the main elements in Anglican public worship, which explains their origin and nature, and shows their depth and strength. It is written mainly for those for whom the Book of Common Prayer is not the basis of public worship, and presents the case for the traditional liturgies.

Making Prayer Real, by Lynn J. Radcliff. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. \$3.00. The aim of this book is to "provide help for all those who want to pray more effectively, to be helped by prayer, to help others by prayer, and actually to feel God's presence."

A series of books on the work of the world Church designed for young people and published by the Friendship Press, New York :

Where'er the Sun, by Samuel H. Moffett. Cloth \$2.00, paper \$1.25. Facts and figures on the churches of many countries interspersed with incidents in the lives of Christians around the world.

Africans on Safari, by Leslie C. Sayre. Cloth \$2.00, paper \$1.25. Biographies of four African Christians.

The Moffats, by Ethel Daniels Hubbard. Cloth \$2.50, paper \$1.25. The story of Robert and Mary Moffat, who spent fifty years as pioneer missionaries in South Africa.

Great is the Company, by Violet Wood. Cloth \$2.50, paper \$1.25. An account of all those men and women who "translated the Bible into obscure tongues, fought for people's rights to read it, and carried it... to all corners of the earth."

African Heritage, by Emory Ross. Cloth \$2.00, paper \$1.25. A description of the reaction of Africans to the three forces — animist communalism, stalinist communism, and the Christian community — which are struggling for their minds and hearts, by a man who has had forty years of missionary experience in Africa.

Accent on Liberty, edited by Mabel M. Sheibley. Cloth \$2.00, paper \$1.25. A collection of true stories illustrating what American churches are accomplishing in the field of human rights through their home mission programs.